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ESSAY

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ON THE

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS :

BEING

AN INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES

OF

THEIR DIMINISHED INFLUENCE AND NUMBERS,

With Suggestions for a Remedy.

BY

SAMUEL FOTHERGILL.

The Gospel is to be given to the world by human agency : when will it be accomplished ? It will be accomplished when those who have the Gospel do their duty ; it might be done now—the great failure has been in action."

PROFESSOR TAPPAN.

Return, O Power of the Pentecost, return to thy people ! Shed down Thy flame on many heads ! To us as to our fathers, and to those of the old time before them, fulness of grace ! Without thee we can do nothing ; but, filled with the Holy Spirit, the excellency of the power will be of Thee, O God ! and not of us."

ARTHUR'S *Tongue of Fire.*

LONDON :

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P R E F A C E.

IN presenting this Essay to the public, the writer feels that he is only discharging a debt of gratitude that he owes to the Society of Friends, for the many advantages and privileges which he has derived from its valuable training, church fellowship, and eminently scriptural and spiritual teaching. The offer of the prize was to him nothing more than an incentive, in a definite form, to undertake that which he had long desired to accomplish; and the Essay was written with the intention of bringing it before the public, whether it should gain the prize or not.

That he will in some respects be misunderstood—that offence will be given to many—that passages will be found in the work which *seem* to imply a spirit very different from that which dictated them, the writer is prepared to expect.

If, however, the work be viewed as a whole, in the same spirit of candour as that in which it was written, and judged of by its whole scope and tendency, it is hoped that its perusal will prove suggestive to the minds of those earnest well-wishers of the Society who see that something is essentially wrong, and who are sincerely anxious to have the cause discovered, that an efficient remedy may be supplied.

The writer's leaning towards Wesleyanism in some particulars will, doubtless, prejudice some minds. The writer was conscious of

this from the first, and felt that, in some measure, it would lessen the probability of gaining the prize. None, however, but those who are very ignorant of the characteristic features of one or both of these systems, would doubt, for a moment, where the chief sympathies of the writer repose. Enough for this purpose has been said of the superiority of the Friends in the pre-eminent spirituality of their doctrines,—their protest against the distinction between clergy and laity—their admirable and unequalled Church polity and discipline,—as distinguished from the arbitrary Conference system of the Wesleyans, and their continued belief in what are called the sacraments, as well as on the subject of war, oaths, &c.

There is much, nevertheless, for the Quakers to learn from the Wesleyans. Different as the two systems seem from each other, they have much more in common than a superficial acquaintance with either would lead any one to imagine. Their views of the leading doctrines of Christianity are to a great extent identical: both recognize the necessity for the Holy Spirit's influence, though differing as to the *manner* in which its aid is to be obtained. The Friends have, perhaps, as much to learn with regard to the activity and method to be employed in propagating the Gospel, as the Wesleyans have to learn of the Friends as to the abolition of types and shadows, and in relation to the true principle and mode of Church government and discipline.

A long and careful observation of the modes in which truth operates, the history of the Church in past ages, and the signs of the times, convince the writer that the pressing want of our age is an organization in which the magnificent doctrines and deep spirit-work of the Friends, and their truly Christian mode of Church government, shall be combined with a system of evangelization similar to that of the Wesleyans, in which the office of the pastor shall be divested of

that priestly character that gives permanency to the distinction between clergy and laity, and the systematic preaching of the gospel and care of the members at all stages of their Christian progress, shall secure the keeping of its views strongly before the members and the world, and prevent that relapse into coldness, and indifference, and worldly-mindedness, which now marks the Friends; and at the same time subdue those extravagances which, though rather an accompaniment than an essential element of Wesleyan labours and Wesleyan success, have done so much to prejudice other and more quiet-going believers against them.

There is one point which, in order to give efficiency to such an organization, and, indeed, to enable any Church long to keep pace with the spirit of the age, will have to be guarded with more care than has ever yet been realized—viz., the tendency of mankind to moral slavery through the agency of stimulant and sedative drugs. George Fox and John Wesley went further in that direction than almost any other men in similar positions. The Friends' query against the unnecessary frequenting of taverns and other public-houses, excess in drinking, and other intemperance; and Wesley's still stronger and more direct protest against all dram-drinking and dram-selling, and all indulgence in snuff and tobacco; bear testimony to their discernment and zeal in this respect. But with all their care, both societies have suffered fearfully from this source of temptation. Henceforward no religious organization can afford to ignore the intimate connexion between man's moral nature and the brain-poisons. To meet the growing public sentiment on the subject, and to keep pace with the results of past experiment, the conditions of membership must be more rigidly defined in relation to these easily besetting sins of civilized lands than anything the world has yet seen. This topic has not been taken up in the body of the Essay, because

its influence is not *peculiar* to the Friends; and other societies equally exposed to it have grown both in numbers and influence, while they have declined.

Mammon-worship, too, must have a more direct and systematic antagonism; and, in this way, history, philosophy, and experience, going hand-in-hand with devotion, the light will be taken from under the bushel, and again held up to the world with something of its pristine freshness and purity—a wave of reactionary influence will flow through existing denominations, and awaken them into increasing zeal and earnestness, and singleness of eye and purity of moral standard—and thus the grand work of the world's redemption will be carried forward towards its glorious completion. To be permitted, in however humble and limited a manner, to become a worker together with God, though it be but to stand as a finger-post, and point out to others the hidden danger, or the glorious path to progress, is the highest ambition of the writer in presenting this Essay to the public; and he now sends it forth with the earnest prayer that, by the blessing of God, it may be a means of good to those for whose especial consideration it was written, and, through them, to the world at large.

SCARBOROUGH,

October 30th, 1859.

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ESSAY

ON

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

“ Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.”—1 THESS. v. 21.

“ Quicken me after thy loving-kindness ; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.”—Ps. cxix. 88.

THE announcement which has called forth the following pages is made on the assumption that the Society of Friends has, during the present century, been declining, both in numbers and influence. It is not, therefore, necessary to enquire into the truthfulness of this position ; but, taking it as the basis of our enquiries, we shall endeavour to show the causes of the supposed declension. That such declension has actually taken place, however, there are few, either of the friends or the foes of the Society, who will be found to deny. The Friends themselves, so far from attempting to deny it, endeavour to find consolation under the circumstances, in the belief that the principles of the Society are more generally recognized by persons of other religious denominations than they formerly were. This is doubtless in some measure the case, though to a much more

limited extent than many will be inclined to imagine; or than would, in all probability, have been the case, if the Friends, as a body, had continued to maintain that prominent position amongst the various religious denominations which, at one time, they did undoubtedly occupy.

That the Society at one time bore a powerful testimony to the world concerning "some of the errors to which it is most prone, and some of the truths which are most necessary to it," we most cordially believe; and that their present comparative silence and inaction is a serious loss to the world,—a loss which nothing can supply but their returning once more to life and activity, or the raising up of another people, who, with more of faithfulness and of continuous zealous labour, shall PROCLAIM their great distinguishing views to the world.

There must be something truly good, and great and noble, and Christ-like, in Quakerism, to account for the high tone of morals, the self-denying, God-honouring, martyr spirit of the early Friends, with their readiness to bear one another's burdens, and their untiring zeal for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the world at large. Such results could never have followed from any other principle than the self-sacrificing Spirit of Him that came to seek and to save that which was lost. The germs of truth that could bind together such an organization under circumstances so adverse, and in times when the general religious feeling was so directly hostile, must have been neither few nor unimportant. Throwing off all allegiance to the Church of Rome and of England, clinging to no system of tradition for their belief; but going at once to the Bible, they claimed for every man that right of private judgment which, up to that time, had scarcely been able to assert its prerogative, but which, notwithstanding the labours and the sufferings of a Wickliffe, a Bilney, a Baxter, and a host of other martyr spirits, was, at the time when George Fox and George Whitehead arose, in imminent danger of being as effectually extinguished in England, as it had been, and remains to be, in the greater part of Continental Europe.

Nor was the right of private judgment the only point in regard to which they maintained a decided stand. Like the early reformers

they asserted that the true call to preach the Gospel comes from Christ alone ; and with no other authority than that which the Holy Spirit gave them, they went forth to preach. Everywhere appropriate results followed : open sinners were converted,—cold formalists were awakened and led to turn to God with full purpose of heart ; at once the best proof that they really did possess the authority to which they laid claim. As in the days of Wickliffe and Luther, superstition, formalism, and an extremely low standard of morality, were fearfully prevalent, both among priests and people. They were the rule, rather than the exception. Vice and immorality reared their unblushing front under the highest sanctions ; and religious conviction and high integrity had become a snare and a source of incessant suffering and danger to the possessor. The secular arm was prostituted to the most depraved and violent proceedings under the pretence of religious zeal ; the wicked bore rule, and the righteous were oppressed for conscience' sake ; difficulties of a strictly conscientious character being made by the persecuting magistrate a sufficient excuse for handing over the most inoffensive and exemplary characters, without the semblance of a trial, to the tender mercies of brutal gaolers and ruffian prisoners, and the death-dealing atmosphere of gaols, so foul and damp and cold as to be utterly unfit for human abodes. Thousands were thus ruined in body and estate, and many died in their hopeless bondage ; verifying remarkably the language of the Prophet,—“ Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off ; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea truth faileth, and he that DEPARTETH FROM EVIL MAKETH HIMSELF A PREY.”

The influence exerted by the Friends at that time was greater than that of any other religious body whatever. They stood in the same relation to the Government and established religion of this country that the Apostles and early believers did to the Scribes and Pharisees and Chief Priests in the earliest days of the Church's history. At that time nonconformity may be said to have owed very nearly all its vigour and life and consistency to them ; for whatever faithfulness others might show, and there were some noble examples, it is obvious

that the nonconformists, as a class, were too time-serving in their sentiments, and too intimately connected with the fearfully unstable political affairs of the time, to admit of their exhibiting any continuous or steady light to the world.

It cannot be denied that the work of the Reformation was very imperfectly effected in England; and that what was achieved by Henry VIII. was rather a transference of unwarrantable human authority in Divine affairs from one potentate to another, than a change from a religion of superstition and formalism to one of life and light and love. The following description of a degenerate Christianity would apply as effectually to the greater part of the Anglican Church two hundred years ago as it would do to the Church of Rome. "The mere human period had succeeded to the creative and miraculous period of the Church. After the extraordinary manifestations of the Holy Ghost which had produced the Apostolic age, the Church had been left to the inward power of the Comforter. But Christians did not generally comprehend the spiritual life to which they were called. God had been pleased to give them a divine religion, and this they gradually assimilated more and more to the religions of human origin. Instead of saying, in the spirit of the Gospel, The word of God first, and through it the doctrine and the life,—the doctrine and through it the forms; they said, Forms first, and salvation by these forms. They ascribed to bishops a power which belongs to Holy Scripture. Instead of ministers of the word they desired to have priests; instead of an inward sacrifice, a sacrifice on the altar; and costly temples instead of a living church. They began to seek in men, in ceremonies, in holy places, what they could find only in the word, and in the lively faith of the children of God. In this manner evangelical religion gave place to catholicism and by gradual degeneracy in after years catholicism gave birth to popery." *

That a vast amount of this formalism was retained in the Anglican Church will probably be denied by none who have given the subject an unbiased consideration; abundant proofs of which may be seen in the facility with which a certain party in the Establishment have,

* D'Aubigné, p. 24.

under cover of the Prayer Book and its provisions, restored in the bosom of the Anglican Church almost every feature of Romanism. Nor need this admixture excite our wonder, when it is remembered that the principle on which the alteration was made was not to make the system as pure as possible, but to rid it of its most obnoxious features in such a manner as to do the least possible violence to the prejudices of a people not half emancipated from the errors of popery, while the persons to whom the important work was entrusted grasped in a very imperfect manner the scope of those glorious principles of spiritual life and light and liberty which were then only dawning on the world.

It was this formalism without life, the somewhat modified remnants of popery, that the Friends attacked: and as in every age and every country there have always been a faithful few, who are willing to lose their all rather than conform to the compulsory religion of the State, so the early Friends, going about from place to place as true evangelists, met with tender-spirited individuals everywhere, who were ready at once to embrace and carry out the spiritual doctrines that they inculcated—and whom fines and imprisonment and premunire, and even cruel deaths, would not compel to attend a worship in which they did not believe, nor deter from frequenting the “conventicle,” forbidden as it was under the empty pretence of its being a meeting for sedition and cabal. These labours and sufferings of the Friends were to that age what those of Wickliffe and Luther were to their respective times; and inasmuch as the doctrines of the Friends were eminently scriptural, and struck at the very root of those tendencies and abuses from which the papal heresy springs, the service that they rendered at that time cannot be easily over-rated. The avidity with which, in many cases, their opinions were received; the marvellous transformations that they produced; replacing the unwearied turbulence of the political agitator, or the ferocity of the fighting sailor, by the meek, forbearing, and forgiving spirit of the true disciple; and the ready reception given to their simple views of the Christian polity and the economy of the Church, even in those turbulent and superstitious times, show that it is not to anything in the

nature of their leading doctrines that we must expect to trace the strange coolness and formality and worldliness which, in strong contrast with the ardour and self-renunciation of early days, now mark the great bulk of the Society.

The Friends pride themselves much on being a "peculiar people,"—but we fear that in so far as they are so now, the peculiarity is of a very different character from that which is indicated by the Apostle, or which marked their early days. It was not a peculiar mode of dress, or address, or worship, to which he alluded; but to that holiness of life, and that zeal for good works, which cannot fail to make those peculiar who carry these great principles into daily action. But the "peculiarities" for which the Friends now contend, instead of promoting their Christian activity, have rather the effect of shutting them out from opportunities for usefulness, and making them zealous rather for the maintenance of certain peculiar views, the exhibition of which to the world they now regard as the grand object of their existence. With deep instruction the Friends might reconsider the passage in which their favourite expression occurs; Titus ii. 14: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS." In the next chapter (v. 8,) this important point is urged again:—"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm CONSTANTLY, that they which have believed in God be CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS."

Such was emphatically the zeal of the early Friends, as the journals of George Fox, George Whitehead, Thomas Elwood, and a host of worthies, fully demonstrated. How little, alas! do the quiet, steady-going, money-making, or pleasure-seeking Quakers of the present day, answer to this noble type of Christian manhood! Not that they are altogether indifferent to the great cause of God and of humanity. All honour to them for their noble and disinterested labours in connexion with the Anti-slavery cause, the Peace Society, and the Bible Society; and of many of them on behalf of the Temperance movement, and other valuable philanthropic institutions. We know that in almost every locality where the Friends are found, there are

two or three worthy members of the Society, who, stepping out from the retirement of a century, take a prominent and exemplary part in the social, political, and religious movements of the day.

But all this does not meet the case. The good work in which every church should be chiefly zealous—which pre-eminently calls for its labours and its prayers, and quickens its zeal—that most important of all good works, the bringing of sinners to God by the preaching of the Gospel, is not prosecuted with a zeal commensurate with its importance, or with the early promise of the Society. It is, we believe, to this point that the declension which is the subject of the present enquiry must be traced. From causes into which we shall have to examine hereafter, the preaching of the Gospel has, comparatively speaking, almost ceased amongst the Friends; what there is, is addressed almost exclusively to their own members, and consists chiefly of exhortations, general remarks, or allusions to their own peculiarities, rather than any direct and systematic unfolding of the great truths of the Gospel.

However important their peculiarities may be, it cannot be expected that they will be appreciated by the worldly-minded or the uninitiated. Once let men be firmly grounded on the Rock of Ages, and they will listen with considerate attention to the views, on minor points, of those who have been instrumental to their awakening. But with the Friends the order is reversed. Their quaint dress and manners first of all prejudice the observer against them; then comes the incomprehensible silent meeting, and the absence of those customary modes of worship which are discarded, not because, like water baptism and the "Sacrament of the Supper," they interfere with their eminently spiritual views, but because they are opposed to the theory of silent waiting—a theory which, to ordinary minds, is quite unintelligible; which, according to the confession of many of the most spiritually-minded and experienced of the Friends, it is very difficult to profit by, and which, according to J. J. Gurney, is very liable to abuse, by engendering a spirit of slothfulness and indifference. Did the Friends show less anxiety to conserve their peculiarities, technically so called, and more zeal in the work of bringing

sinner to Christ, their life and vigour would proportionably increase, and they might soon be again what they once were,—a burning and a shining light, in the midst of “a sinful and perverse generation,”—“a city that is set on an hill,” that “cannot be hid.” As it is, their peculiarities, their exclusiveness in all that pertains to religion, their utter standing aloof from other zealous Christian communities, so far as any co-operation in the direct work of preaching the Gospel is concerned, or any strictly religious intercourse, has the effect of placing their light under a bushel; from which arises the double disadvantage that men are prevented from seeing the light, and that the light itself, for want of air, is becoming more and more faint, and seriously threatens to go out altogether. That the Friends are conscious of this tendency is obvious; and those who possess, in combination, the greatest proportion of zeal and liberality, have, for some time, been trying to probe the evil to the bottom, and, if possible, to discover some remedy.

Amongst the endeavours recently made to supply past deficiencies, may be mentioned the Sabbath-school movement, and the meetings for reading the Scriptures that have been attempted in various places. The well-wishers of society at large, and of the cause of Christ, will hail these measures as steps in the right direction; but those who have most carefully studied the subject will not fail to see that, conducted as they are, they too much partake of the prevailing weakness of the Society,—a morbid dread of instrumentalities, of interference with the headship of Christ; which prevents them from allowing any individual so decidedly to take the lead, as to give the character and tone necessary to render such occasions truly profitable.

We may safely predict that, until the Friends so far overcome their prejudices as to introduce the Bible into their public meetings for Divine worship, appoint men to read and expound the sacred volume, and acknowledge that as true praying and preaching, which, though entered upon at a stated time, is, nevertheless, not done in man's will, but under a sense of imperative duty, and which, though not despising the aid of previous research and prayerful preparation,

still relies upon the aid of the Holy Spirit, both for the guidance of the speaker and the opening of the hearts of the hearers; no means that they can devise will be sufficient to stay the deeply-seated and rapidly-spreading lethargy and decay which have invaded their borders, and under the influence of which their first works are forgotten, many slumber or are sick among them, many more seek elsewhere, in systems embodying far less of true spiritual life, for light and warmth, while those who are spiritual, in spite of the surrounding deadness, are too much wedded to their fatal prejudices to admit of their suspecting anything wrong in the system, inducing them to attribute all the evil to want of individual faithfulness, or some equally vague and intangible cause.

This presumption, that their views of Christian faith and practice are perfect, and that all the defects and deficiencies, so generally admitted and lamented, are to be attributed, not to any defect in the system, but to want of faithfulness on the part of the members in carrying them out, arrogant as it appears to all except themselves, is eminently calculated to divert their attention from the true causes of the evil. J. J. Gurney says that the views of Friends "appear to be rightly grounded on certain essential principles of the Divine law, and to be adapted with singular exactness to the purity and spirituality of the Gospel dispensation." Again he says that these distinguishing doctrines, including that of "silent waiting," "are all grounded on the great Christian law, that they who worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth." These positions, then, once taken for granted, the cause of failure must be sought for elsewhere; but in assuming these positions there is no allowance made for the possibility that, however scriptural the law referred to may be, the inferences founded upon it by the Friends *may* be unsound. No believers in the Bible will dispute the law, but very few of all the myriads that have lived and died in the faith will admit the soundness of the fabric which the Friends have built upon it. Here they have fallen into the error of all sectarians; that is, of all who, whether intentionally or not, attach a degree of importance to *their own peculiar views*, which leads them often to manifest an equal, and

sometimes even a greater, degree of anxiety as to the maintenance of those peculiar views, than to the spread of the truth itself; thus materially limiting their power and their disposition to do good, or to co-operate with the zealous members of other denominations.

CHAPTER II.

AUTHORITY AND TRADITION.

"Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you and said, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."—MARK vii. 5-7.

THERE is much meaning in the expression "extremes meet," as may be amply illustrated from the present and the past of the Society of Friends. They began with vindicating the right of private judgment and the religion of the Bible, in opposition to the traditions of men, and the authoritative opinions of the false teachers of religion. But they have gone so far in setting aside the knowledge and the experience of their fellow-men, and the authority of Scripture, that they have gradually drifted into a condition in which the opinions of the members in general, are as effectually ruled by that which has been laid down for them, and embodied in the present practices of the Society, as Rome or England. And yet, when brought to the test of argument, they repudiate that very form of tradition by which they allow themselves to be influenced. It is an extremely common reply to any suggestion as to any of the views of the Friends being erroneous, "We must not reason on such matters." The early Friends, it is said, were raised up, and led by the Holy Spirit, in their organization of the Society, and it is not for us to reason upon that which has been laid down under this influence. Every one who knows any thing of the present state of the Society must be aware that this kind of reasoning has, to a very great extent,

the effect of restraining private judgment, and inducing the members to rest contented with a state of spiritual coldness and destitution which, without this quiescent repose on the judgment of others, would be all but impossible.

It was in this manner that the Jews made void the command of God by their tradition. They superseded the written word by their own explanations of that word. "The Scriptures, say they, are water; the traditions are wine." "The words of the Scribes are lovely above the words of the law." "Some of the words of the law are weighty, but the traditions are all weighty." The fourth commandment is to do no work on the Sabbath day. Tradition said if a loaf were carried on that day by a single person he would be guilty; but if two persons carried it together, both were innocent. In the same manner the Romanist asserts that the Pope is infallible, and places the decrees of the Church above the individual judgment and conscience; arguing that believers in general cannot be safely left to put their own construction on the Sacred Scripture.

We do not mean that the error into which the Friends have fallen is so exclusively or fatally injurious as that of the Jews or the Romanists. Nor is it altogether identical in character. With the Friends it is intimately connected with their leading views as to the influence of the Holy Spirit. This they originally preached as "a light to lighten every man that cometh into the world;" but now they receive as its teachings those things which the early Friends received, and no longer reserve to themselves the privilege of examining them afresh and discriminating between their own deductions and those already made for them. Their extreme fear of man's instrumentality has thus, by inevitable reaction, brought about the very evil that they sought to avoid; at the same time that it has induced them in a great measure to forego the use of those instrumentalities which are the most efficacious in the propagation of truth and the correction of error, and which, in all ages of the Church, have received the signal and uniform blessing of the Almighty—the simple preaching of the word, and the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures, with all the subordinate appliances arising out these, and adapted to the varying exigencies of times and places.

It is Quakerism, and nothing but Quakerism, that the Friends are content to propagate. Not the Quakerism of George Fox, but a quaint and stiff formalism, with external badges that conceal and disguise the truth, and fearfully limit the power of its professors to influence the world around them. It is as if the Bible Society, instead of being anxious solely to disseminate the words of life, in any kind of binding and type as should be best adapted to the wants of the purchaser, should say, No! here is our edition, and if you will not have it you shall have none. The Friends have offered the pearl of great price, it is true; but then it has been so wrapped round with the napkin of non-essential peculiarities of dress, address, and modes of worship, that the glimpse which the world has had of the pearl has served rather to excite a hopeless admiration of something rich and rare, but inaccessible to the generality, than a hopeful desire of obtaining a share of the treasure. Or as if they should persist in offering a coin which is not current:—the metal is good, but then it is coined into such quaint and fantastic, and withal such inconvenient shapes, that the world refuses it; not only because of its inconvenience, but because of the increased difficulty thus presented to the testing of its genuineness. They are, however, so pre-eminently attached to this peculiar coinage of their own, that rather than melt it down and coin it afresh, or rub off any of its angles, they persist in either passing it as it is, or keeping it to themselves. A double loss is thus sustained—by themselves and by the world: the withdrawal of all this precious metal from general circulation is painfully felt, and will help to account for many of the most alarming social symptoms of the present day; while on themselves the effect is no less disastrous. As in all the affairs of life, there can be no standing still, vigorous progression and increase, or decay and diminution being the only alternatives; so it is with the Friends: they have ceased to progress, they are rapidly declining, and the time appears to be approaching, when, if they do not return to their first works, the great Master will come and say, "Take from him the talent, and give it to him that hath ten talents."

General as is the kind of sentiment to which we have adverted above, and injurious as it has been to the best interests of the

Society, there are those, who, however they may have been unconsciously brought under the spell, advocate a free and independent exercise of private judgment. Well would it have been for the Society and for the world, if the following sentiment of J. J. Gurney had been more extensively acted upon. He calls attention to two rules laid down by the Apostle : 1, Let no man judge another man's servant ; 2, Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind ; in order to which, he adds, it is plainly necessary for us to "prove all things." "On this ground," he proceeds, "it will not be disputed by persons of good sense, candour and liberality, that it is generally very desirable for Christians who are arrived at sound years of discretion, to *prove* those peculiar religious principles in which they have been educated,—to examine the foundation on which they rest,—to try them by the test of SCRIPTURE and EXPERIENCE,—and more especially with all humility and devotion of heart to seek the counsel of God respecting them." Well would it have been for the Society and for the world, if such truly sound and Christian sentiments had been generally entertained and acted upon by the Friends. That this has not been the case, however, is too notorious to all who are acquainted with the workings of the Society. J. J. Gurney himself was extensively blamed by the orthodox for this very liberality ; and it cannot be denied that, to a very considerable extent, the disposition to refer all questions to the authority of the Church, and to expect conformity on the ground of that authority, takes the place of that private judgment of which J. J. G. invites and encourages the exercise.

"This careful and devout examination," he goes on, "might, in various instances, lead to the discarding of views and practices which are useless and irrelevant, and which have no favourable influence in promoting the cause of vital and practical religion." This sentence ought to be inscribed in letters of gold over every meeting-house of the Friends ; indicating as it does a proper and modest consciousness of the possibility that, in some points, our favourite system may be wrong—an admission which, too generally, has given place to the opinion that the Friends are right, and that all beside are wrong ;

and that any one who ventures to examine and decide for himself, and act upon his convictions, must, of necessity, be wandering from the truth; unless, indeed, the process end in his remaining, in every respect, a Quaker still. But let the admission contained in this golden sentence of J. J. Gurney be really entertained in the mind, and it will give a wholesome liberality to opinion, render necessary changes possible without endangering the welfare of the Church, and reconcile many of the most earnest members to the slow and gradual process of healthy reform, which, in the present state of feeling, they are compelled to regard as impossible—under which impression they abandon the Society, and seek, elsewhere, it may be in an atmosphere in many respects much less congenial, an opportunity to breathe more freely, and to exercise those gifts that may have been entrusted to them.

But if this principle be adopted in sincerity, and if the investigator be prepared, as J. J. Gurney suggests, in the event of his investigation convincing him that the system is good, to “hold fast that which is good,” he must, in justice to his convictions, and to the great object in view, be prepared not only to discard in sentiment, but to seek the removal of, that which, on mature and prayerful deliberation, he finds to be useless and irrelevant, and unfitted to “promote the cause of vital and practical religion.”

The necessity of being prepared for this alternative will be obvious, if it be considered that everything which is not essential or truly useful becomes a positive hindrance. It occupies time and attention that ought to be otherwise employed;—it leads to the placing of confidence in that which is useless, to the exclusion of that which is useful;—it offends the good sense of those who see through it, and prejudices the more intelligent and conscientious against the whole system of which it is maintained to be an important or an essential part. Such is the tendency of the human mind, that, in every community there will always be found some to exaggerate without bounds, the importance to be attached to the non-essential and indifferent features of their several systems; confounding them with things that are really essential or valuable, in such a manner as to confuse the

moral sentiment of numbers, and lead to an extensive disregard of the truly excellent and even essential features of the system. To raise non-essential peculiarities to the level of essentials, is, in effect, to degrade essentials to the level of non-essentials; leading those who cannot accept the one, either to reject both, or to seek a position in which the one may be entertained without the necessity of adhering to the other.

In the minds of all genuine sectarians—and there are such in every community—the sect itself is identical with Christianity. Thus with the orthodox Quaker, Quakerism is Christianity, and Christianity is Quakerism, and neither more nor less. Hence the straight collar and the peculiar bonnet come to have an importance attached to them which places them on a level with justification by faith, the influence of the Spirit, the unlawfulness of oaths and of war. The whole system is a “chain” which may be as effectually broken “by the lapse of one of its smallest as of its largest links.”

It is satisfactory to know that during the last few years a considerable reaction has taken place in certain directions, and many, very many, of the most earnest of the Friends, especially amongst the younger members, are painfully feeling the necessity for some change to avert the recent tendency to annihilation, and to supply the keenly felt want of more spiritual care and instruction throughout their borders. A disposition to examine has thus been awakened, similar to that embodied in J. J. Gurney's golden maxim; and it is in that spirit that we propose to pursue the present enquiry, expecting to find something to condemn, and much, very much, to approve; something which is useless and irrelevant, and therefore to be discarded; something the removal of which would, like taking away the dross and the tin from the silver, prove an inestimable advantage; or like the removal of a rotten timber from the side of a noble and seaworthy ship, to replace it by sound heart of oak, that she may plough the waves once more, and prove a harbinger of peace and joy to thousands of sin-tossed wanderers on the ocean of life—a fold for the lambs of the great Shepherd—a nursery for the recruits of that great army in earth and heaven, the children of the kingdom,

soldiers of the cross, whose weapons are “not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.” That the strictures about to be made in the following pages may be viewed in this light ; that they may be received as they are made, in the earnest desire that light may be thrown upon the subject, with a view to the *discovery* and *removal* of that which now dims the lustre and obstructs the usefulness of a very important section of the Church of Christ on earth, is the sincere prayer of the writer. “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”

CHAPTER III.

THE BIBLE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

“Oh may these heavenly pages be
My ever dear delight !
And still new beauties may I see,
And still increasing light !

“Divine Instructor, gracious Lord !
Be thou for ever near ;
Teach me to love thy sacred word,
And view my Saviour there !”

STEELE.

PROTESTANT Christians in general have agreed in recognizing the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. The Friends, however, in their zeal for the Holy Spirit, have diligently controverted this view ; maintaining that the Holy Spirit, which gave forth those divine truths, must be superior to the Scriptures themselves, and that therefore the Holy Scriptures are not to be regarded as “the adequate primary rule of faith and manners,” but that they are to be “esteemed a secondary rule, subordinate to the Spirit.”* It is, we believe, in connexion with the distinction here drawn, that we shall

* Barclay's Apology, p. 3.

find the germ of that injurious influence which has gradually diffused itself through the whole framework of the Society, and eventually brought about the supineness and declension which we now have to deplore. Robert Barclay's lengthy and elaborate argument, founded on this proposition, is all employed to prove what no one is disposed to dispute. He takes the expression in a sense that Wycliffe and Luther, and Christians in general, never intended, when pleading for the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. The early reformers pleaded for the Bible and the right of private judgment; not against the Holy Spirit, but against monkish tradition, and a form of belief imposed by the authority of one man, or one church, upon the rest of the world. But this very private judgment includes that for which Barclay contends; and he himself quotes numerous passages from Calvin, the French Churches, the Synod of Dort, and the Westminster divines, to show that they all acknowledge the need of the Spirit to confirm the teachings of the written word, and to seal its truths upon the heart. But he goes further than this, and maintains that every person in whom the Spirit dwells, is in a position to pronounce authoritatively on the authenticity or correctness of any portion of Scripture. Here he confounds the Holy Spirit itself with man's deductions, and runs into an extreme which has led, in process of time, to a depreciation of the value of Holy Scripture, which we cannot but regard as one principal cause of the Society's degeneracy.

This doctrine, which has recently been revived in a new form in Germany, and is now, with stealthy pace, insinuating itself into the literature and even the pulpits of this country, tends as effectually to supersede the true office of the Holy Spirit, and place man at the mercy of the crude imaginings of his own unregenerate and carnal mind, as the extreme which the Friends are so anxious to avoid. To illustrate his meaning, Barclay brings forward the exhortation, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith;" and asks, "What Scripture rule can assure me that I have the true faith?" He gives two syllogisms to show that it cannot be proved from Scripture. They are as follows:—

"I find this proposition in the Scripture,—

“ He that believes shall be saved. Thence I draw the assumption—

“ But I Robert believe;

“ Therefore I shall be saved.—Again :

“ He that hath the true and certain marks of faith hath the true faith.

“ But I have those marks ;

“ Therefore I have the true faith.”

He objects to these conclusions, because, as he says, “ in both the minor is of my own making, not expressed in Scripture, and so a human conclusion, not a Divine position ; so that my faith and assurance here is not built upon a Scripture proposition, but on a human principle, which, unless I be sure of elsewhere, the Scriptures give me no certainty of the matter.”

Let us see how this mode of reasoning will apply to the leading proposition of the Friends, on which their whole system of prayer and preaching is founded. They assert that the aid of the Holy Spirit cannot be depended upon at any given time, and that we cannot even ask for its aid until moved to the act by its special impulse, and that therefore the only acceptable mode of conducting God’s worship is to sit down in silence, and wait till the impulse comes. Is this, we would ask, supported by any single Scripture declaration ; or is it a merely human conclusion ? The Friends will say, neither the one nor the other, but something that the Holy Spirit taught the early Friends. But there is just the same room to question this declaration as to doubt the minor member of the syllogism. The one is a human conclusion as much as the other ; and we shall hope to prove that that which asserts the necessity of silent waiting is not sanctioned in Scripture, but that it is one of those human conclusions from Scripture, to the authority of which Barclay so reasonably objects.

It is not, as we have already observed, in opposition to the Holy Spirit, but to the traditions and ordinances of men, that the Bible is spoken of as the only rule of faith and practice. Thus Columba maintained that it was the Holy Ghost, and not the forms of a corrupt church, that made a servant of God. “The Holy Scrip-

tures," said he, "are the only rule of faith. Throw aside all merit of works, and look for salvation to the grace of God alone. Beware of a religion which consists of outward observances; it is better to keep your heart pure before God, than to abstain from meats. One alone is your head, Jesus Christ." * Here is the Holy Ghost recognized,—the headship of Christ asserted,—forms are repudiated. How like the Friends themselves in all but the one expression, "the Scriptures are the only rule;" and surely the Friends would admit this too, as opposed to the dogmas of a corrupt and formal Church. Again, Wickliffe: "The canon law has no force when it is opposed to the word of God." † The Friends themselves acknowledge the authority of Scripture in this sense. Barclay says: "We do look upon them as the *ONLY* fit outward judge of controversies among Christians, and that whatsoever doctrine is contrary unto their testimony may therefore be justly rejected as false; and for our parts we are very willing that all our doctrines and practices be tried by them as the judge and test." Mark the inconsistency of this with what has gone before, and the looseness of the language. He speaks of the Scriptures as the *only judge*, and again the "judge and test;" and yet he objects to their being regarded as the highest rule and touchstone. As he deprives the Holy Spirit of the attribute of personality by calling it the rule, so he makes the Scripture personal by calling it a "judge." The confusion of terms in connexion with this subject, with its consequent confusion of ideas, does not stop here. In J. J. Gurney's work the following remarkable expression occurs: "Obedience to the dictates of the Spirit in the soul is the main rule of life." Robert Barclay says the Spirit is the primary rule; J. J. Gurney says that "obedience" is the rule. Let us for once adopt the syllogistic method of which Barclay is so fond.

According to Barclay, the Holy Spirit is the rule; but according to J. J. Gurney, obedience is the rule; therefore obedience is the Holy Spirit.

We will not press home the conclusion, *quod est absurdum*; the Friends have appreciated the true character and influence of the Holy

* D'Aubigné.

† Ibid.

Spirit to an extent attained, perhaps, by no other Christian community; and it is deeply to be regretted that a laxity of language, such as we have just pointed out, should have been allowed a place in their writings; the effect of which has been seriously to mar their good work, undesignedly to rob the Bible of its proper importance, and its proper place in their assemblies for public worship, and to inaugurate that system of expectant silence, under which the organism seems likely to perish from sheer inanition.

In the third proposition itself, the language of Barclay is equally loose. He first calls the Holy Spirit "the first and principal leader," and then calls the same Spirit the RULE: as if the intelligent being who gives the rule and applies it, and becomes to those who follow him a LEADER, could, at the same time, be the rule itself. The error of the Friends appears to consist in confounding the rule with the authority from which the rule proceeds. It is no more proper to speak of the Holy Spirit as a rule or law, than to speak of the king or the lawmakers of a country as the law of that country. There are many, doubtless, who regard the Bible as the "word" and the law in an improper sense. Christ is the Word, and the law of God includes his will in reference to all things, whether in heaven or earth. But his written word contains the account of that portion of his will which applies to man, and the knowledge of which is necessary for his salvation. The written word is, as the Friends maintain, powerless for good, except as it is brought home by the Spirit through an enlightened understanding to an awakened heart; but, accompanied as it always will be by the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of Christ, it is able to make wise unto salvation; and it is, to all intents and purposes, the sole rule of faith and practice. As the declaration of Columba quoted above clearly shows, it is not as opposed to, or distinct from, the Holy Spirit, but in harmony with Him as the great teacher, that this declaration is designed. Accordingly, the Bible with private judgment has ever been, and must forever remain to be, the grand instrumentality on the one hand, and security on the other, for that diffusion of spiritual light and truth on which, under God, the salvation of the world depends. "If any

man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not : for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have SPOKEN, the same shall judge him at the last day.”—John xii. 47, 48. The office of the Comforter was to bring all things to the remembrance of the disciples, whatsoever Christ had said unto them. “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

The inconsistency of Barclay, in his attempt to exalt the Spirit at the expense of the Scriptures, is apparent from the fact, that his whole argument to prove the Scriptures unnecessary as a rule of faith and conduct,* is, from first to last, grounded upon and sustained by quotations from those very Scriptures. While he hints that it is not “by means of such and such writings or books that God will convey such and such words” into the mouths of his people, he takes those very words of Scripture into his mouth in order to prove his position ; and instead of giving forth any of the oracular utterances that he says the Lord has promised to put into the mouths of all his children in this new dispensation, his whole treatise is an argument, and nothing more, based on those very Scriptures that he is labouring to prove, even as a means, unnecessary. Had the early Friends arrived at their knowledge of the spiritual character of true religion, and of the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, without any knowledge whatever of the Bible and its contents, then might Barclay have claimed for the Spirit’s teaching what he has claimed. Let us not be misunderstood. We do not dispute the *power* of the Almighty thus to communicate these truths to individuals and to communities ; but we do dispute the conclusion that, having been deposited and handed down to us in the Bible, they are likely ever again to be communicated, except through its instrumentality. The history of untold millions of the human family who, since the commencement of the present dispensation, have lived and died in the grossest heathen darkness, proves our position ; and the fact that

* “Apology,” pp. 78, 79 ; where he speaks of such as are under the new covenant needing no man to teach them—to whom the teachings of Scripture, though not necessary, are, nevertheless, “very comfortable and profitable.”

those who know most of God and spiritual things are those who most prize and study the Bible, and act out its teachings, amply confirms it. Where the Bible is not, there vice and immorality, superstition, idolatry and atheism, barbarism and ignorance, reign triumphant. Where the Bible is, and is prized as it ought to be, there religion, morality, order, intellectual social and political progress, prevail; and there the Holy Spirit, whose light is not comprehended amid the darkness of paganism, is most recognized, and sought as a Guide and Comforter. The Bible is God's appointed means for turning men's attention to that very influence of the Holy Spirit which, as Barclay justly contends, is essential to bring us to God, to convert the soul, and give us a living interest in Christ, the sinner's friend. But it is the Gospel which comes first, not the Spirit, (as Barclay has it, p. 79,) bringing *to light* spiritual life and immortality; and then the Holy Ghost the Comforter is sent to seal the truth upon the heart, and lead the willing disciple into all truth.

If Barclay's theory were correct, then every saint would be equally competent to write with the authority of the "holy men of old," who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." He seems to lose sight of the fact that those utterances having been once made, by the very few out of all the millions that have lived and died, whose writings we are accustomed to regard as inspired, there is neither the occasion nor the motive to communicate those truths afresh, in the same supernatural manner, to every soul of man. But having been recorded for our instruction, the reading of them conveys to our minds just the amount and kind of information which is necessary to enable the "darkness" of our naturally sin-polluted hearts and clouded understandings to comprehend that light which otherwise might continue to shine there all in vain.

Barclay goes so far as to say that there is no reason why new books should not be added to the Bible, seeing that the same Spirit is still given. We grant that there is no limit to the power of God; but we maintain that such a manifestation of that power is eminently improbable, and as such it is treated by the whole of the Christian

world, not excepting the Friends themselves—a thing not by any means to be expected. The same argument would apply to the signs which in early times were to follow them that believed—working of miracles, treading on serpents, immunity from the effect of poison. Any one, however, who should now put forth a claim to such powers, would at once be regarded as either a lunatic or an impostor.

A considerable share of the misunderstanding of the Friends, and consequent misdirection or suspension of effort, has arisen from the sentiment indicated in the following sentence from the work of Elisha Bates:—"It has been supposed by some that the Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice; and, constructively, that without a knowledge of them salvation is not possible." A long argument is devoted to the question, in order to show that salvation is possible without the knowledge of the truths revealed in the Scripture. But this is not the question at issue between the Friends and enlightened Christians generally. The question is not whether men *may* be saved without this knowledge; but whether—after revealing his will in the Scriptures, as it has never been elsewhere revealed to man, giving to those Scriptures an authority and an influence never possessed by any other instrumentality, and commanding his disciples to preach those truths to all nations—we are entitled to expect that the Holy Spirit will do, without their instrumentality, that which is constantly being done by means of them, and which we never see done without them. If the views of the Friends are correct, there is nothing to prevent the most depraved of heathen nations from rising to all the light and purity and knowledge found among the best portions of those countries where the Bible is known. But such a result never has been witnessed; and there is nothing in nature or revelation to warrant the expectation that it ever will be; whereas, in thousands of instances, the simple introduction and pressing home of Bible truth has been the occasion of the entire renovation of individuals, and sometimes of whole communities; securing exemption from the condemnation of sin, freedom from its dominion, and a subsequent expansion of all the powers of the soul, and development of all that is good and great in man. The gospel is the power of God unto

salvation ; but the gospel is not the Holy Spirit : it is the *message* of reconciliation which the Father sent by his Son Jesus Christ to a guilty world ; the record of this message is in the New Testament ; and it is by means of this gospel, or God's message, or glad tidings, that life and immortality are brought to light.

Elisha Bates shows that he is not unconscious of the weak point in the views of the Friends ; for he adds, " I am aware that it is possible not to distinguish between that which is *possible* and that which is *useful* ; and consequently not to ascribe to that which is not indispensable its due weight and importance." He then goes on to show that the Friends have always maintained the utility of the Scriptures, and quotes passages from the " Book of Extracts" to prove this. But the unprejudiced reader will not fail to be struck with the cautious reserve with which this award of utility is conceded. Thus, in 1728 we have the expression, " that most excellent book the Bible ;" and in 1720 it is recommended to search the Holy Scriptures diligently, with due regard to the Holy Spirit from whence they came ; " for they contain *excellent doctrines, rules and precepts, divine and moral.*" If this is not to " damn with faint praise," we do not know the meaning of the expression ; for this is what might be said of hundreds of good books, which lay no claim to that superiority to which the acknowledged inspiration of the Holy Scriptures entitles them. In other passages, however, the Friends concede much more than they have acted out, with reference to the authority of the Scriptures. - In an advice from the Yearly Meeting of 1815, the following occurs :—" Steadily direct your minds to Him who alone can open and *apply* the Scriptures to our spiritual benefit." In 1728 the Scriptures are described as " THE EXTERNAL MEANS of conveying and preserving to us an account of the things *most surely to be believed* concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the fulfilling of the prophecies relating thereto." These are concessions in the face of which the pertinacious refusal to acknowledge the Holy Scriptures as the only rule of faith and conduct, in the sense usually understood by enlightened Christians, cannot be too deeply regretted. They have made a distinction where there is no difference, and on this

distinction they have founded an elaborate system of ministry and worship, whose failure is now patent to the world.

It is worthy of remark, that when the Saviour of the world was tempted of the Devil, he replied to each suggestion of the enemy from that which was *written*; nor can we conceive how any part of God's will can assume the character of a rule universally binding to the end of time, which is not presented in such a permanent and unchangeable form that, however individuals may misapply it, it still remains the same, shedding the same clear light from one generation to another. The argument of Barclay, that because the Bible does not contain the special directions necessary for each individual in the minute details of his everyday duty, it cannot therefore be regarded as the sole rule, is almost too trifling to deserve serious notice. The idea of a rule or law applying itself only requires to be mentioned in order to show its absurdity; and yet Barclay devotes a serious and somewhat lengthy argument to the occasion; and has, by the confounding of things that differ, involved the views of the Friends in an obscurity and an inconsistency which has most materially influenced their doctrines and their practices. It is to this point, we firmly believe, that we must recur, in order to discover that element of fundamental weakness which from the first has been incorporated in the Society—which has gradually paralyzed its activity, diminished its usefulness, and brought about that state of things which it is the object of the present inquiry to trace to its true causes. In the following chapters, we shall have to pursue the operation of the principle now under consideration, in the various arrangements and workings of the Society.

CHAPTER IV.

IMMEDIATE TEACHING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Holy Spirit, gracious Lord,
To us draw nigh,
And to each true heart afford
Thy ministry :
Fill us with abounding grace,
Strength and wisdom from above,
And in each dark dwelling-place
Kindle thou the flame of love.

LUTHER.

THE perceptible influence of the Holy Spirit is a principle which the Friends have done well to maintain ; and though now acknowledged to a much greater extent in the world at large than it was in the early days of Quakerism, still it is by no means appreciated as it ought to be, in the Church, or in the world. In fact, their testimony on this important subject is as much needed now as ever it was. It is the more to be regretted, on this very account, that they can rest satisfied with their present state of silence and inaction, and that they do not seek to modify their system so far as to secure the free and regular unfolding of their views, to their own members and to the world. Their light has become dim, and there must be a cause for it. If their theory on this subject had been all that it professes to be, and that they once thought it was, it should have gone on increasing steadily in its influence and its acceptance with the world. The weak point, whatever it is, cannot be on the part of the great Master who raised them up, and “thrust them out ;” nor of the Holy Spirit, the Guide, the Comforter, who is pledged to abide with his people for ever ; nor of the Book of books, for that is able as ever to make wise unto salvation. In short, the failure must be in that part of the fabric which man has constructed. Individual unfaithfulness, the favourite outcry of the Friends—though, alas ! too common—will not explain the state of things. That unfaithfulness itself

must have an adequate cause. If the fountain has been poisoned, the stream cannot be pure : if the leading ideas are confused, the teaching will partake of that confusion, and the practice will correspond with the teaching ; nor, we are assured, can any attempt to remedy the condition of the Friends ever produce more than a very partial effect, until this cardinal error is rectified. Modified as the views of Barclay appear when presented in the mild and persuasive style of J. J. Gurney, their leading characteristics remain the same. We have already seen the confusion of terms into which he falls when he speaks of obedience as the rule ; and the same want of perspicuity will be found in his treatment of the subject of the present chapter.

In following out the subject of the immediate teachings of the Holy Spirit, we find him attributing to it the following particulars :—

1. The necessity for man's humiliation and Christ's exaltation.
2. The necessity for daily self-denial and taking up the cross.
3. The deadness and darkness that result from grieving the Spirit.
4. The application of the truths of Scripture to the particular circumstances of the believer.
5. The necessity for an exact, comprehensive, and unmixed obedience to the will of God.

Now it must be obvious to the unprejudiced mind, that four out of the five kinds of teaching here attributed to the *immediate* influence of the Spirit, are doctrines of the Holy Scripture ; some of which, though feebly felt after by a few of the most enlightened heathens, and somewhat more fully recognized by the chosen people of God, were never distinctly known or recognized by men in general until the words of Christ, recorded in the New Testament, gave them a distinctness and an authority which have since been felt and recognized by millions ; and which, so long as the Holy Scriptures are devoutly read, will continue to be recognized till the end of time. Does J. J. Gurney wish us to understand that the knowledge of the necessity for man's humiliation and Christ's exaltation is ever arrived at independently of Bible truth ? The fourth particular is the only one in which the immediate guidance of the Spirit can be expected, *independently* of Scripture truth ; and, even in that respect, the divine

will with regard to the line of conduct to be pursued by any individual is more frequently communicated in connexion with Scripture than in any other way.

Jesus Christ promised that the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, should come, to call to the remembrance of the disciples whatsoever He had said unto them, and to make clear to their apprehension all those things that they were not able to bear in that early stage of their discipleship. The North American Indians worshipped the Great Spirit, and recognized his voice speaking in their hearts; but it was in a very imperfect manner, and never so as to teach them the great truths that J. J. G. attributes to its teaching, independently of means.

The true office of the Holy Spirit, then, it would appear, is that of a guide; a living, personal, ever-present, though unseen friend, with the power and the will to lead and guide and protect the believer in every emergency, if the believer will but give humble and diligent and earnest heed; never resisting—never holding back—never going before his guide:—a being who may be grieved, and led to take his departure; but who patiently and lovingly attends the believer, dwells with him, warms his heart, and enlightens his understanding, and APPLIES with PERCEPTIBLE AUTHORITY the written rule, the once-spoken words of the great Lawgiver.

It appears, then, that the Friends have expected from the *immediate* influence of the Holy Spirit that which is not to be expected from its influence, *except in connexion* with the means of obtaining knowledge of spiritual things contained in the Scriptures. They have thus, unintentionally it may be, but not on that account the less really, lessened the authority and importance *practically* attached to the Scriptures, and confounded with direct or immediate inspiration those teachings of the Spirit, the *medium* of which is the truth contained in the Scriptures, and which, therefore, cannot in any proper sense of the term be called immediate. In one sense all teaching must be immediate. The truth, whether derived from reading the sacred page, or hearing it from the lips of the preacher, must be sealed upon the heart by the co-operating influence of the Holy

Spirit; but this is not the point at issue; for this is admitted, as we have already shown, by almost all classes of Christians; while few would be disposed to deny the possibility, still fewer would allow the probability, of what the Friends contend for. The results of their extreme and somewhat confused view on this subject have been, as we have seen—1, The diminished importance attached to the Scriptures; 2, A correspondingly low estimate of the importance to be attached to the ministry; and 3, The almost total disuse of those instrumentalities by means of which God accomplishes his purposes, sustaining the spiritual life of the believer, and spreading the truth abroad in the world; means which, whenever they are faithfully employed, in humble consciousness of man's nothingness, and trustful dependence on God's all-sufficiency, never fail to produce corresponding fruits to his praise; while the neglect of them, either by individuals or communities, cannot take place without consequent coldness, deadness, and, if long enough continued, death and dissolution.

CHAPTER V.

POURING OUT OF THE SPIRIT.

“Lord, we believe to us and ours.
 The apostolic promise given;
 We wait the Pentecostal powers,
 The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.
 Assembled here with one accord,
 Calmly we wait the promised grace,
 The purchase of our dying Lord:
 Come, Holy Ghost, and fill the place.”

WESLEYAN HYMN-BOOK.

A VERY favourite passage with the Friends is the following:—
 “And it shall come to pass, afterward, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall

see visions : also upon the servants and upon the handmaidens will I pour out of my Spirit"—Joel ii. 28. Also, Jeremiah xxxi. 33:—"After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall no more teach every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord : for they all shall know me, from the least unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord : for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

These passages are continually brought forward by the Friends to prove that the preaching of the gospel is now no longer necessary, but that this outpouring of the Spirit does for men all that is required for their salvation, independently of outward means. This view is in strict harmony with that of the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit referred to in the last chapter. It harmonizes, too, with the "silent waiting" now so prevalent, and affords a kind of apology for the very small importance attached to the employment of sustained efforts for the conversion of the world. The argument is, *All may know* him, therefore it is their own fault if they do not. But if it be inferred that this outpouring of the Spirit *on all flesh* was to be independent of the outward revelation of God's will contained in the Bible,—then ought we to find the fruits of it in the heathen nations throughout the world. On the contrary, it is painfully clear that except where the Bible has gone, and *by means* of Bible truth, the heathen nations remain as dark, and as helplessly ignorant of the great provision made for their salvation, as they were at the time when the prophecy was written.

This remark equally applies to those inhabitants of Christian countries who have not heard the glad tidings ; nor is there any reason to suppose that it will ever be different. Nay such is the extent to which God in his wisdom has made us dependent on each other's instrumentality, that it is next to impossible for any man to maintain a lively and consistent Christian walk, who does not hold frequent intercourse with his fellow-believers, or employ himself continually in seeking to spread the Redeemer's name. Not that it is impossible with God, but this is the way of his appointing.

The possibility of depending too much on man's aid in spiritual matters is such as to require continual care. This tendency was so keenly felt and appreciated by the early Friends, and the evils produced by it were then so rampant, that it should scarcely excite our wonder, though it may be a subject of regret, that they have gone so completely into the opposite extreme. The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation ; but it must be communicated in the appointed way before its blessings are likely to be realized. The promise is held out that whosoever will call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. "How then," adds the Apostle, "shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."—Rom. x. 13–17. Called to the work by the Spirit of Christ, yearning over the perishing heathen, but *sent out* by the churches at home, the missionary has taken his life in his hand, and gone unprotected, save by his unseen Lord and Master, amidst the degraded and barbarous savages of the South Sea Islands. He has preached according to his ability the gospel of Christ, though in a way that Robert Barclay would call "superstition, will-worship and idolatry," and which many of the modern Friends would say was "denying Christ." They have laboured and prayed, and by disinterested attention to the bodily comforts of the heathen, have proved that they came in the spirit of the great Master, as expressed by Paul,—"*We seek not yours, but you.*" Undaunted by sickness, hunger, opposition, and danger, they have persevered until God's blessing upon their labours has sealed the work divine. The desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose. Idolatry, superstition, cruelty, and barbarism, have given place to the intelligent and heartfelt worship of the great Jehovah, brotherly love, the abandonment of war, Christian legislation, and the cultivation of the useful arts.

The Friends, strangely enough, seem to have misapprehended the

manner in which the Spirit is to be poured out upon all flesh, and the law written in the hearts of the people. The saints of old had God's law, and they loved it. David says: "O! how I love thy law!" What was this law that David loved? Certainly not the ceremonial law of Moses; but that expression of God's will with which he was acquainted; the very same law which, in much greater fulness, is revealed in the gospel of grace, and of which the holy men of old had a foretaste that made them long for more, but which could only be fully and generally realized by the "bringing in of a better hope" in Jesus Christ. The people in general had little conception of this law; they were in a condition to which the outward ceremonials of the law given from Sinai was pre-eminently adapted. They were not participants in the sense that all believers are now. The ceremonials of the law were all carried out by the appointed tribe and the chosen family—the tribe of Levi—the house of Aaron. The mass of the people were standers-by, spectators, and sometimes hearers, but not full participators in the acts of Divine worship. The moral obligations of the law are the same in all dispensations,—“to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.” “To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself;” on these two hang all the law and the prophets. “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” This, however, was very imperfectly understood during the ministration of condemnation, under which many things were permitted, and even commanded, which, with the present light, are totally inadmissible—having been distinctly forbidden by Christ himself.* The washings and sprinklings and carnal ordinances were IMPOSED ON them till the times of reformation: “a yoke,” says Peter, “which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.”—Acts xv. 10. This imposed law which required *to be borne*—this ministration of condemnation, which, by its constant sacrifices and washings and burnings, spoke plainly of guilt and condemnation, but merely indicated, not provided, a means of escape—was to be exchanged for the ministration of reconciliation; the “law of the Spirit of life in

* “Ye have heard that it hath been said.”

Christ Jesus." It was to be written in the hearts and affections of God's people, who, no longer under the yoke, the schoolmaster, or the bondage of fear, now serve with love and grateful alacrity; their wills being enforced by the Divine will, and themselves made new creatures in Christ Jesus; partakers of the holy nature of a holy God, they now serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, with an intelligent appreciation of the ground of their acceptance in Christ Jesus, and a zeal for all that is holy and just and good. Instead of standing without while the high priest went into the holy place to minister, offering first for his own sins, and then for the people, every believer may now COME boldly to the throne of grace, plead on his own behalf the one offering of the great High Priest of our profession, and receive direct from God, through his Son, grace to help in every time of need. "The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." This bringing in of a better hope was the revelation of a higher law, the law of love, of self-sacrifice for the good of others, of overcoming evil with good, of living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit, and obtaining the dominion over sin even in this present life. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."

The Jews were commanded to write their law on their door-posts, to bind it as a frontlet on their foreheads, and on the palms of their hands, that they might have its requirements in incessant remembrance. The priests were to have inscriptions on their dresses, in the skirts of their robes. It was the abuse of this kind of homage to the law to which Christ referred, when he reproved the hypocrites of his day, for making broad their phylacteries and enlarging the borders of their garments.

But this element of love, self-sacrificing love, sends home the law of Christ at once to the heart of the repentant and reconciled child of adoption, and fixes it there indelibly and operatively, as a living principle and spring of action, regulating, controlling and directing every impulse and affection, and filling the heart with ardent longings

to be like Christ, and to do his will, in such wise that all outward remembrancers become totally unnecessary. It is a well of water springing up unto everlasting life; a fountain of life preserving from the snares of death, ever springing, fresh and pure and invigorating; filling the heart to overflowing, as the believer faithfully and lovingly abides under its influence, and follows its impulses; guiding into all truth; a safeguard against every assault of the enemy; a law written in the heart, not independent of the written Word, but received through its instrumentality, and sent home by the Holy Spirit.

But this law is not written in the hearts of the heathen now, or of the unconverted in Christian lands, any more than it was before the coming of Christ; the prediction, therefore, must rather be regarded as describing the character of the present dispensation, and predicting its ultimate fulfilment, than as a thing *now being realized* by all flesh, as the current views of the Friends on this point, and the frequent observations of their preachers, would seem to imply. The prediction is fulfilled in the experience of the individual, when he has embraced the truth in such a manner that it frees him from the condemnation of sin, raises him above its power, and enables him to walk in newness of life; and so moulds and regulates and governs his whole life and being, body, soul, and spirit, as to make him a new man in Christ Jesus, created afresh unto love and good works. It will be fulfilled with reference to all flesh, when all have experienced this blessed change; and so long as there remains a brother who does not know these great truths by his own happy experience, so long will it be necessary for some one to say to that brother, "Know the Lord." Thus, then, this striking prediction, instead of being an excuse for inaction, becomes the strongest possible incentive to diligently proclaiming the glad tidings, and exhorting one another, as we see the day approaching when OUR opportunity for doing good, and proving our faith by our works, shall exist no longer. "Work while it is called to-day; the night cometh, when no man can work."

On the day of Pentecost the promise was fulfilled—"I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." Peter declared, "This is that which was spoken." It was not, however in a sense which communicated, but which guaranteed it to all flesh. The state of things was ushered

in, under which it should be *accessible* to all as it had never been before. But it was not then *communicated* to all flesh; otherwise the labours of the Apostles, instead of commencing from that very time, should then have ceased, because the dispensation was brought in—"This is that which was spoken." It was not, however, completed then, but begun; it has been going on ever since, and it will not cease to be carried on, until it is fulfilled in the universal spread of the knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ, and its hearty reception in the hearts and inward parts of all men, leading to a thorough change of nature, and a hearty reception of Jesus as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. In this will consist the consummation of the promise, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

The effects of the views of the Friends on the subject of the present chapter, in lessening their sense of the urgency of the great work of winning souls to Christ, and their disposition to labour heartily in the great work of the world's redemption, must be regarded as intimately connected with their present fruitless and cold condition. It is at once a cause and a sign of their fearful degeneracy. There is, alas! little in common between the modern Quaker, who congratulates himself on the immunities purchased for him by the sufferings of other generations, his comfortable worldly position, his privilege of reading his Bible at home, and enjoying his own cogitations in his silent meeting, regardless of the world of sin that lies around him—at his very door, and the cry of perishing sinners that are rushing headlong to destruction:—and the earnest, untiring, fearless Quaker of earlier times, who, under the constraining love of Christ, groaning constantly under a measure of that agony which his great Master felt, when, with visage more marred than any man, he bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows, forsook house and home, encountered hardships, perils, and fierce persecutions, in order that he might preach the gospel to dying men, and be instrumental in bringing some to that knowledge of the Lord, which the modern Quaker seems to expect will be brought about by some magical or supernatural process with which he has no manner of connexion whatever.

CHAPTER VI.

EXTREME VIEW ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"We cannot be content to look upon the minister of this actual hour as anything less, in the intention of God and our Saviour, than an instrument 'of the mighty power of God,'—the power which is unto salvation. We do not expect the gift of tongues or of miracles, because these were not essential to the work of the ministry; but the active co-operation, the abiding unction of the Holy Spirit is."—"TONGUE OF FIRE," BY WILLIAM ARTHUR.

It will be necessary to our purpose still further to pursue the question whether the position which the Friends have taken up in reference to the Holy Spirit's influence has an adequate Scripture foundation, and whether, in their anxiety to maintain that position with all its attendant results, they have not overlooked some of the most important and obvious Scripture truths.

Robert Barclay and J. J. Gurney alike level their argument chiefly against those who neither wait for the Spirit nor expect its influence. That there are such persons must be admitted, and that they were very numerous in the times of Fox, Penn and Barclay, is notorious. But it is equally clear that there may be a middle course between this denial of the Holy Spirit's office and the doctrine of the Friends. That there is such a middle course is proved by the practices and doctrines of many of the worthies that were contemporary with Fox and Penn and Barclay, and of the great bulk of evangelical Christians at the present day. While acknowledging with the Friends the need of the Holy Spirit's aid for the conduct of true worship, and the effectual preaching of the gospel, they, however, believe that this aid may be depended on in answer to believing prayer; and moreover, that meetings for worshipping the Almighty may be held at certain stated periods, and the solemn duties of prayer and praise, and the preaching of the gospel, entered upon—not as Barclay has it, "in man's own time, and which he can begin or leave off at his pleasure,"—but in the fear of God, from a profound conviction that

to neglect to make and carry out these appointments would be treachery to the cause of Christ, painfully indicative of want of faith in his promises or of intelligent appreciation of his designs.

But the sweeping censure of Barclay not only condemns the practice of the great proportion of Christians at the present day, and of those to whose instrumentality nearly all the practical piety in the world owes, under God, its existence; they equally condemn the teachings and preachings of those great men who have been providentially raised up from time to time—as Wickliffe, Luther, Knox, Rowland Hill, Wesley, Whitfield, and a host of others—whose “will-worship and abominable idolatry,” as Barclay would style it, has been blessed and owned by God, to the conversion of thousands, the dispersion of grossest error, and the diffusion of truth, with all its healing, vivifying influences, from one end of the earth to the other.

The Friends do not pretend to bring forward one passage of Scripture to show by a distinct declaration that the early believers or the Jews of old actually began their meetings for worship by “silent waiting.” They assume the position as a necessary consequence of *their* mode of viewing the work of the Holy Spirit. The weakness of this position, and the looseness of their mode of reasoning on the subject, cannot be better shown than by a reference to those very passages which Barclay has quoted in order to sustain his argument on this point. We give the passages as they occur in the “Apology;” and we ask any candid person to say, whether singly, or as a whole, they are calculated in the slightest degree to favour the theory that “silent waiting,” as entertained by the Friends, was a systematic and essential part of the public worship, either of the Jews or of the Christians in Bible times.* As a general rule, the passages imply a dependence on the Almighty, a trusting in him, an expectation of good from him which is not only compatible with, but in many of the passages necessarily implies, the use of active means; some of them evidently extending their meaning not to a meeting for worship

* The passages quoted by Barclay on this subject need only to be referred to, to show how little they apply to the question at issue. They were none of them properly meetings for public worship.

merely, but to the habits and practices of a whole life. In short, so irrelevant are some of the passages referred to, to the subject in hand, that the idea is strongly suggested that they have been selected simply because they contain the word "wait," and not as the result of any careful investigation of their bearing on the point in question.

1. Psalm xxvii. 14:—"Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

2. Psalm xxxvii. 7:—"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." The result is given verse 9:—"For *evil-doers* shall be *cut off*; but *they that wait upon the Lord*, they shall *inherit the earth*."

Psalm xxxvii. 34:—"Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it."

Prov. xx. 22:—"Say not thou, *I will recompense evil*; but wait on the Lord, and he *shall save thee*." Mark the antithesis here. This is an injunction against avenging ourselves, with an assurance of God's protection from evil-doers.

Isaiah xxx. 18:—"And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that WAIT FOR him." The whole chapter should be read. Barclay's application of this verse is simply trifling with the subject.

Hosea xii. 8:—"Therefore turn thou to thy God; keep *mercy and judgment*, and wait on thy God CONTINUALLY." Read the context.

Zeph. iii. 8:—"Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, UNTIL THE DAY THAT I RISE UP TO THE PREY; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." A rather long silent meeting this!!

Matt. xxiv. 42, and xxv. 13:—"Watch, therefore, for ye know not

what hour your Lord doth come.” “ Watch, therefore : for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” One does not know whether to be astonished most at the presumption or the bigotry that could take these passages from their magnificent connexion, bearing as they do on the whole life and circumstances of the believer, to make them do service in support of a theory which, at best, can only be regarded as a freak of the imagination.

Mark xiii. 33, 35, 37, are to the same purport.

Luke xxi. 36 :—“ Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” Here is the duty of a whole lifetime again, indicating a process which must be carried on in every waking moment ; whether employed in the ordinary affairs of life, or in the active services of the sanctuary.

Acts i. 4, 5 :—“ And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should NOT DEPART FROM JERUSALEM, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost NOT MANY DAYS HENCE.” We have reserved the examination of this passage to the concluding chapter. Suffice it here to say that the interval over which this waiting was to extend was no shorter a period than ten days.

Acts xx. 31 :—“ Therefore watch, and remember, that, by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.” This injunction to watch was immediately preceded by the prediction that after Paul’s departing grievous wolves would enter, not sparing the flock, and perverse men arise from themselves, seeking to draw away disciples after them. We leave our readers to discover the bearing of this last upon “ silent waiting.”

We forbear to occupy more space by quoting the remaining passages, but simply give the references, that any one who is not yet satisfied as to the kind of Scripture authority advanced by Barclay in favour of “ silent waiting,” may read the passages and judge for himself. 1 Cor. xiv. 13 ; Col. iv. 2 ; 1 Thess. v. 6 ; 2 Tim. iv. 5 ;

1 Pet. iv. 7 ; Psalm xxv. 3, and xxxvii. 9, and lxix. 6 ; Isaiah xl. 23 ; Lam. iii. 25, 26 ; Isaiah xl. 31 ; "Apology," p. 341. We have asked many Friends of varied standing in the Society, if they had ever turned to these passages as they stand in the "Apology," but we never met with one who had done so previous to our calling attention to the subject. Both waiting and watching are so often spoken of in Scripture—the one so obviously implying a deliberate trusting repose on the faithfulness of the Almighty, and the other an incessant unwearying vigilance to defeat the designs of our soul's enemy, both of them compatible with a course of action varied in character, extended over a whole lifetime—that it would be a work of supererogation to enter into any formal argument to prove their inapplicability to the question in hand. It cannot be too deeply lamented that the Friends have attached so much importance to a system so utterly without a Scripture foundation, to the neglect of approved means of usefulness, of which we have abundant example in the Scriptures, and which are sustained by the most distinct commands and unquestionable examples.

As a set off against Barclay's formidable array of quotations, we propose to give two or three to show that stated times were observed in the celebration of God's worship, both in private and in public, and that "waiting" is not incompatible with the use of means.

Psalm lxxxi. 1, 2, 3 :—"Sing aloud unto God our strength ; make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the *new moon* ;—in the TIME APPOINTED, on our solemn feast-day."

Psalm xxxiv. 17 :—"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles."

Psalm xxxiv. 6 :—"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." A man in a pit would have to *wait* and *cry* at the same time. He must *cry* in order to attract attention, and still he must *wait* until the deliverance come. The two are by no means incompatible—they are essentially connected ; whereas to wait in silence under such circumstances, would indicate the failure of faith, or the sullen moodiness of despair. In

a passage that J. J. Gurney brings forward in support of his favourite theory, David actually combines the two.—Psalm lx. 1: “I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined His ear unto me, and heard my cry.” To all except the mind prejudiced in favour of a pet system, the crying and the waiting would here be taken as going together. But David actually fixes beforehand his time for vocal prayer, and expresses his assurance that it will be answered.—Psalm lv. 17:—“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice.”

Psalm xxxiv. 15, and 1 Peter iii. 12:—“The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.”

Heb. iv. 16:—“Let us therefore COME BOLDLY unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help IN TIME OF NEED.”

Psalm c. 4:—“ENTER into his courts with thanksgiving, and into his gates with praise.”

If David be in distress he cries unto the Lord; if poor and needy, he says, “Help thou me;” if cold and dead, and in that state in which the Friend would refrain and wait in silence, David STILL SPEAKS, and appropriately SAYS, “Quicken thou me, according to thy word.” Whatever may be required as to “waiting,” the cry seems a necessary condition without which no answer is to be expected; but the Friends have attached such an undue importance or an erroneous meaning to the waiting, that they have nearly ceased altogether to cry, and the result is such as might fairly have been anticipated. If the Friend finds the fire to burn as he sits and muses, so do thousands of Christians when engaged in vocal prayer; having begun, perhaps, under a painful sense of coldness and deadness, they have, nevertheless, from a conviction that it was God’s appointed way, addressed Him in prayer; every word uttered has been attended with increasing power; deadness has been changed for holy fervour; the hungry has been filled, and supplication has ended in thanksgiving and praise. It is one of the commonest snares of the enemy of souls to tempt believers to abstain from prayer on this very ground of their unfitness; a most effectual method for rendering such a condition permanent. It is dishonouring God to

suppose that if we feel our need, He will not give us power to use his own appointed means for having it supplied. If there is any reluctance it is always on our part. His readiness to hear and answer could not be more strongly expressed for our encouragement than in the following (Isaiah lxx. 24):—"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

The exhortations and encouragements, nay the commands, to pray throughout the New Testament, and the examples also, are so numerous that it is difficult to make a selection; and as we shall have occasion to refer again to the subject we will leave it for the present, simply referring the reader to the parable of the unjust judge, which Jesus spoke in order to teach the lesson "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." The attempt to get over this subject, by saying that praying inwardly or in the heart is meant, is painfully unsatisfactory. The faintest "breathing of a sigh" after God will doubtless be recognized if the result of true feeling; but it will never take the place of earnest, systematic, persevering vocal prayer. "Rejoice evermore: Pray without ceasing: In everything give thanks."—1 Thess. v. 15-17.

"I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands; without wrath and doubting."—1 Tim. ii. 8.

CHAPTER VII.

WATCHING AND PRAYER.

"And again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."—MATT. xviii. 19.

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"—LUKE xi. 13.

ROBERT BARCLAY quotes Matt. xxiv. 42,—“Watch and pray,”—to show that watching is to precede prayer (“Apology,” p. 349);

a position which no one who knows what true prayer is will be disposed to controvert. But there is ample room to question the construction that he puts upon it, when he says that we are to watch and *wait for* the seasonable *time* to pray, which is when the Spirit moves thereto. Such an inference in connexion with any of the affairs of ordinary life would be regarded as extremely impractical. It is doing serious violence to the text. Whatever duty any one is about to enter upon at a stated time, it will be essential for its proper discharge, that the mind be gradually prepared for it, by withdrawing the attention from other subjects, and steadily fixing the thoughts upon the one that is about to claim the whole attention, and tax to the full the capabilities of the individual. The judge who is about to take his place on the bench—the lecturer who is about to elucidate some department of science—the student about to pass his examination—all must thus prepare the mind for coming duties, if they would discharge them aright. And such preparation, if they are qualified in other respects, will fit them to enter at once on their several duties when the time arrives. It is the same with the worship of the Almighty. The person whose life and conversation are in harmony with the law of his God; who “lives in the Spirit, and walks in the Spirit,” who is “instant in season and out of season,”—and such is the frame of mind which is required of every Christian, whether a minister or not, with a corresponding amount of care to have his mind collected, distinctly feeling his dependence on the help of the Spirit,—may fairly presume that when under these circumstances he asks for the aid of that Spirit, it will be granted.

There could not be a greater mark of disrespect to an earthly potentate than to come into his presence in such a condition or frame of mind, that the preparation necessary for addressing him properly should be done in his presence—during the interview. And surely the great Jehovah, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, may reasonably expect that his children, when about to meet for the purpose of holding communion with Him, instead of rushing into his presence with the mind full of the hurry of business, or the distracting objects of some favourite pursuit engrossing the attention; or,

which is little better, in a state of coldness and deadness which unfits them for the solemn acts of worship; they should come fully prepared to enter at once upon the solemn duties of the occasion; thus providing for the occupancy of the whole time with suitable exercises, and complying with the injunction of the Psalmist,—“ENTER into his courts with thanksgiving, and into his gates with praise.”

Barclay's loose mode of reasoning is again conspicuous on this point. He says, “Therefore cannot we prefix set times to pray outwardly, so as to lay a necessity to speak words at such times, whether we feel this heavenly influence or no; for that we judge were a tempting of God, and a COMING BEFORE HIM WITHOUT DUE PREPARATION.” Not at all! To come before him without due preparation would certainly be tempting God; but the fixing of set times does not *preclude*, it rather enforces, the necessity for DUE PREPARATION. What argument might not be made to appear plausible by such a “begging of the question” as this?

As we have already observed, one of the most frequent forms of temptation with which Satan tries the true believer, is to induce him to desist from using the means of grace, for fear that he may offend by not using them aright. There could not be a greater delusion. The very feeling of unfitness to use those means ought to be the strongest possible incentive to a prompt and diligent exercise of them. What time so suitable to ASK for *warmth and light*, as when you are SENSIBLE of *coldness and darkness*? As well might the shivering houseless wretch, driven by the pitiless storm of winter, refuse to approach the fire, as a man under similar spiritual disadvantages hesitate to approach the throne of grace. “Blessed are they that hunger, for they shall be filled;” but then it is on condition of their asking: “ASK and ye shall receive.” To say we have not faith to ask, is to dishonour God; that very absence of faith constitutes our most aggravated sin. As well might a man who wishes to learn to swim desist from entering the water until he has acquired the wished for art. It is by use, not by inaction, that all our powers, gifts and graces, must grow: the greater the sense of inability to pray, the greater the need that the effort should be made. Much is said by

the Friends about silent prayer and secret hidden wrestlings; but those who have earnestly and sincerely tried both will bear out the assertion that there is, about the distinct audible expression of our wants to the Almighty, a specific and perceptible influence that silent prayer will not and cannot convey. We do not in the slightest degree wish to disparage silent prayer in its proper place and time. A thousand occasions occur through the day when it alone is available, and there may be seasons in the experience of the believer when it is congenial. Something of the kind is suggested in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, iii. 27-30:—"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. HE SITTETH ALONE, AND KEEPETH SILENCE, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him; he is filled with reproach." This is as it ought to be, —a blessing will attend such silence; but this passage cannot, we conceive, except by an extremely forced construction, add any weight to the Friends' theory of "silent meetings;" nor can it render less authoritative the command of Christ,—“Thou when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly:” still less will it afford a substitute for social prayer in the family circle, in the select meetings of true believers, or in the great congregation. Nothing can be more clear and pointed than the recognition of preconcerted prayer in the following declaration, (Matt. xviii. 19):—"If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." A promise the truth of which has been realized times without number.

When we consider the many hindrances that there are to the regular attendance of public worship, the manner in which most persons have the necessary cares of the world, if not its unnecessary pursuits and pleasures, pressing upon their attention throughout the week, it will be seen that the whole time must be extremely short which can be allotted to the *direct* pursuit of that knowledge of the Scriptures which is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for cor-

rection, for instruction in righteousness." To those who study the Scriptures most, and most devoutly, they present an inexhaustible fountain of knowledge of the most elevating and profitable character; and those who are most anxious to cherish the flame of Divine love on the altar of the heart, find that they cannot be too often refreshing their memories with its inspired teachings, constituting as they do the ordinary and most important medium through which the Holy Spirit enlightens the understanding, purifies the affections, and exalts and warms the heart.

Such being the disproportion between the time ordinarily at command and the vast and solemn importance of the occasion, we must be prepared to expect that, with so much of the time of the Friends taken up in silent waiting, the amount of Scriptural instruction conveyed to the members must be, indeed, very small. It is probable that, at the present day, taking the whole of England through, not a quarter of an hour on an average in each meeting of every Sabbath is occupied in oral communication; and out of the time thus occupied, it will be found that a large proportion consists of exhortation rather than instruction or the expounding of Scripture. We are told that, in proportion to the number of members, there are as many ministers as at any former period. This may be the case; but when it is borne in mind that many meetings have no minister at all, and generally spend the whole time in silence; while in others the minister will often be silent for weeks together, and often from home; and further that few of the ministers when they do stand up occupy more than from ten to twenty minutes, and very frequently not more than five minutes; it will be seen at once that it is impossible that the Friends should, either to their own members or to the world, "declare the whole counsel of God." No wonder, then, that even the devout amongst them acknowledge that they find it extremely difficult to profit by their meetings for worship, and for weeks together return from them as empty as they went—that the worldly-minded find their thoughts so steadily running in the accustomed channel of commerce, science, or art—that the members acknowledge to a great extent ignorance or doubt of their great fundamental principles, and

that a vast and rapidly increasing proportion of the more earnest of the young people leave these barren mountains, where there is so little of dew and rain and fields of offering, and go to the more fertile valleys, where, with less exalted views of the spirituality of Christianity, there is far more life and warmth.

The point at issue between the sincere and devout of other persuasions and the Friends seems to be this :—both parties agree that to pray without the Spirit is not only useless, but that it is mocking God. The Friends then say, If you do not feel fit for the duty, *wait* till you do. The other party say, You must by no means desist from prayer ; the command to pray is absolute ; the neglect of the duty is necessarily followed by spiritual dearth. Since, then, the duty must be performed, and it cannot be performed aright without a certain state of preparation, it becomes an absolute and imperative duty to seek for that preparation ; and we are encouraged by the assurance that we cannot seek in vain. We have as much right to excuse ourselves in the neglect of any other Christian duty as in this, from an idea of our own inability or unfitness. If we are faithful in doing our part, “watching unto prayer,” all day long and every day, and especially as the appointed time draws near, and if we exercise faith in the promises of Christ, the required aid will never be wanting when the occasion arrives. If ever applicable, these promises must be especially so on such an occasion : “Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name He will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name : ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”—John xvi. 23. To show the applicability of this promise to the gift of the Holy Spirit, Jesus made that touching appeal to the readiness of fathers to comply with the requests of their children, and then adds,—“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, HOW MUCH MORE shall your heavenly Father give the HOLY SPIRIT to THEM THAT ASK IT?” To carry out the analogy, when would the father be so likely to give the fish or the bread to the child, as when he saw him to be in need of it ? So would the time of supreme need be the favoured time for our heavenly Father to give the Holy Spirit to his asking children. There is a strange inconsis-

tency in the Friends' views on this subject, for no body of Christians have insisted more fully than they have on the freedom and fulness with which the Holy Ghost is now given to every believer, or on the necessity that is laid on every believer to maintain habitually a state of reverent, watchful consciousness of God's nearness to him—a condition pre-eminently adapted to fit us to enter on his social worship. By means of this inconsistency they have as effectually distinguished their ministers from the rest of the people as the division into laity and clergy has done with other denominations ; and they are at this very moment as reluctant to recognize the gift in a brother who does not feel called upon to exercise it exactly after their fashion, as the most sincere believer in the approved method of laying on of hands, &c., &c.

The advocate of a prescribed form of prayer advances the very same difficulty as the Friends—that the minister cannot be expected to be prepared at any given time to offer prayer that is acceptable to the Almighty, or that expresses the wants of his congregation. In this difficulty the Friend says, "Wait till the impulse comes;" and often this waiting continues till the end of the meeting, and that for several weeks in succession ; or the last five minutes are taken up in vocal prayer ; or, after the usual time for "breaking up" the meeting, some one rises, and with the minds of the hearers prejudiced by their having waited in silence an hour and a-half, or two hours, when every one has become uneasy, and begun to wonder when the signal is to be given for their liberation—and it may be, sundry blowings of noses, putting on of hats, and significant shufflings of feet, have given warning to the heads of the meeting that patience is nearly exhausted—they are detained till the said minister has "relieved his mind." Whatever may be said as to the necessity for the minister to sit an hour and a-half on such occasions, in order to be prepared to speak five or ten minutes, the laws of physiology proclaim unmistakeably that the audience must be in the least favourable condition of mind and body for profiting by what is communicated.

The advocate of a prescribed form of prayer, on the other hand,

may secure the very best form of words conceivable; but when the same form is repeated again and again, the law of habit comes into operation, and the accustomed sounds glide over the ear, or are uttered by the lips, without reaching the understanding or the heart. They come from the book, and not from the heart, and though, to a certain extent, as in the case of singing, the very utterance of the words is calculated to awaken the feelings that they express, still they form a very inadequate substitute for the gushings of a heart filled with gratitude and love to God, and burning with zeal for his glory and the salvation of sinners. But this is not the worst. As with the Friends, the means taken to avoid the evil serve only to enhance it. Thus the clergyman knowing that he has only to read an appointed form of words, and the Friend knowing that he is not *expected* to utter any words at all, are alike tempted to become indifferent as to whether they encourage the spirit of prayer or not. As to the extent to which this result is experienced where a liturgy is used, it is not our province here to inquire. The tendency of the system of the Friends to produce this result is acknowledged and pointed out by J. J. Gurney. In his chapter on the selection, &c., of ministers, he says that "the absence of all human interference with the sole prerogative and peculiar work of the Lord,—however excellent and desirable in itself,—will be found to have its imitating and corresponding vice in SPIRITUAL DULNESS and INACTIVITY; in a REAL NEGLECT of the DIVINE CALL, and in the OMISSION of the REQUIRED DUTY." "Such," he adds, "is our liability to error, and such the artfulness of our spiritual enemy, that the very doctrine of our own insufficiency may be made a COVER FOR INERTNESS, and for a CULPABLE and COWARDLY SECESSION from the good fight of faith."

This acknowledgment on the part of J. J. Gurney speaks volumes. It has been confirmed to us by the confession of approved ministers in the Society, both in public and in private. They have acknowledged the extreme difficulty they find in attaining to the object of silent waiting—often for weeks together having experienced no satisfactory degree of that solemn prostration of soul before the Almighty, and lifting up of the desires to Him, which, according to their theory

is the mere preliminary to acceptable worship. The middle course generally pursued by those who use extempore prayer in their stated services, most effectually meets the difficulty. They are not one whit less sensible than the Friends of the need of the Holy Spirit to direct their thoughts, to solemnize their minds, to warm their hearts, and to raise them above the engrossing attractions of earth, and to enable them to give expression to their wants in vocal prayer. But instead of adopting either of the extremes just pointed out, they, with a more exalted faith, accept the promise of the Saviour, that their heavenly Father will give them the Holy Spirit. The knowledge, then, that they will be expected to engage in public prayer at a given time, presents to them the strongest possible inducement to seek, by private prayer, and earnest meditation, and incessant watchfulness, a state of preparation for the solemn duty—preserving them alike from the indifference of the man who has a prescribed form of prayers to read, and the spiritual dulness and inactivity of the Friend, who painfully realizes the truth of the adage, “what is anybody’s business is nobody’s business.” Instead of having to wait for the impulse, the man who in faith thus gives himself continually to prayer, comes with a heart yearning over his congregation, and full of the conviction of his own utter nothingness. He asks and receives according to his faith, and the consequence is, that instead of going away empty, as the Friends have to do so frequently, in spite of the supposed super-excellency of their boasted system,—such a minister rarely, if ever, leaves the pulpit, without receiving, and, as an instrument in God’s hands, conveying, a distinct and perceptible blessing. We are aware that some of these ministers have expressed a disposition almost to long for something like the system of the Friends, and to shrink from the burden, as they have felt it, of thus uttering words at a stated time. But here the favourite mode adopted by the Friends to account for their own present condition may fairly be brought home. May not this be altogether for want of individual faithfulness? We never hear of such men as John Wesley and Rowland Hill having such experience, though they often felt disappointed at not having an opportunity,

when they arrived at a fresh place, of proclaiming God's compassion to "dying men."* If the Friends are capable of profiting by past experience, (and we are happy to see signs of a disposition to do this to a greater extent than has hitherto prevailed), they cannot but see, that the fair and faithful trial which they have made for the last two hundred years, is, so far as the doctrine of silent waiting is concerned, a decided failure; and they must, if ever they would return to a state of life and vigour such as every true Church should exhibit, be content very materially to modify their views and their practices on this most important subject.

If importunate and unremitting prayer is necessary to the vigour and the growth of the spiritual life in the individual believer, it is not less so in the Church. United prayer must be regarded as essential, in fact, to the prosperity of Christ's cause. It is in answer to united prayer that God's blessings are conferred; and it must be regarded as one of the marked defects of the system of Friends, that while their system *allows* of any one engaging in prayer in their meetings for public worship, they have no special seasons for prayer, and take no means to encourage their members to engage in that most refreshing, strengthening, and invigorating exercise. The rarity of vocal prayer in their meetings for worship, and the entire absence of meetings amongst the members for social prayer, must be regarded as one very important defect—directly calculated to lower the tone of spiritual life within their borders, to lessen their interest in the spread of Christ's cause, and to paralyse their efforts for the conversion of sinners and the reconciling of the world to God.

* The introduction of meetings such as we have elsewhere suggested, founded on the model of Paul, 1 Cor. xiv., for spontaneous utterance, where "all might speak and all be edified," would doubtless be a great relief and encouragement to the minister—as valuable probably to him as to his congregation.

CHAPTER VIII.

SILENT WAITING.

“Occupy till I come.”—LUKE xix. 13.

“Peter therefore was kept in prison : but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him.”—ACTS xii. 5.

“Preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.”—2 TIM. iv. 2.

So great a change as that which the Friends have made from the ordinary modes of worship, by the introduction of silent waiting, cannot be a matter of indifference. If not productive of positive good, it must result in absolute loss. Such, we believe, has been the case to a fearful extent. All our talents and graces grow by exercise. To occupy, implies to USE in such a manner that GROWTH may be the result. The man who returned the one talent whole as he had received it, was condemned as “wicked and slothful.” All good impulses and convictions, if not developed and employed in action, become dead. J. J. Gurney has ably drawn attention to this subject in his “Thoughts on Habit and Discipline.” The Friends should be an example in this respect. One of their most favourite texts is, “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man TO PROFIT withal.”—1 Cor. xii. 7. What is this but a talent? Premature and excessive exertion is doubtless an evil, and must be carefully guarded against ; but so surely as the child is invigorated and strengthened by exercise adapted to its strength, so surely will the young believer ; as surely as the limbs of a child will pine and grow feeble through inaction, or grow strong and firm by means of their legitimate exercise, so does the spiritual life require its proper exercise, as well as its proper aliment, from the very first. As a full-grown man who is not *regularly and fully* employed in business, or in some sphere of active

usefulness, acquires habits of indolence and indifference, which steadily impair his powers and lessen his aptitude and his inclination for useful life; and as the mind, unless employed steadily in the acquisition of knowledge, the exercise of discrimination, and the steady prosecution of some well-concerted design, actually degenerates and loses capacity, so with the spiritual life of the more advanced believer. The spiritual as well as the intellectual and physical faculties must, from first to last, have their appropriate employment—graces must be put to the test, and fruits brought forth, culture and fruit-bearing, discipline and labour, must give tone, and vigour, and reality to the life in the inner man, or lethargy, if not death, will be the inevitable consequence. “Faith without works is dead.”

That system, then, of Church government must be considered faulty in one grand particular which does not provide for the careful *supervision*, ENCOURAGEMENT, and *regulation* of the exercise of the graces of all its members, from the very babes in Christ up to the young men and strong men, and the fathers and mothers in Israel. Nothing is so strengthening to the faith, or so adapted to root and ground the believer, as a distinct and decided profession of his being on the Lord’s side, and labouring earnestly to bring others to the knowledge of that grace by which he has himself been blessed. We are fully alive to the injury that may result from prematurely entering upon the several stages of Christian usefulness; but the danger of inaction is at least as great, and, from the very nature of the case, is less likely to be discovered, and more easily results in a complacently acquiescent indifference to the cause of Christ. Into this error we are satisfied the Friends have fallen. They make it their boast that they leave all the work of preparation and selection to the great Master; but philosophy and Scripture example alike teach us, that in this respect, as in almost every other, the great Master works by MEANS—the neglect of which, on the part of man, is invariably followed by a corresponding failure in the result.

“Bring ye all the tithes into my storehouse, that there may be meat in my house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a

blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”—Mal. iii. 10.

The view taken by the Friends of the general diffusion of the Spirit, ought, if correct, to qualify all their members to reprove, rebuke, exhort; to make every one of them feel it incumbent upon him to seek to spread the glad tidings. But their doctrine of waiting for a special impulse has, unhappily, more than neutralized their truly scriptural doctrine with regard to the necessity that the Christian minister should be called by Christ—and that being so called, he does not require the authority of man to qualify him for the work. For a Friend now to ask his neighbour after the state of his soul, or to take any direct steps to bring about his conversion to God, would be painfully repugnant to his habitual silence on religious subjects. If a young Friend should tell an older one, that he believed himself to have passed from death to life, that he was a new creature in Christ Jesus, and was distinctly conscious of God’s reconciled and pardoning love, it would be regarded, to say the least, as great presumption—probably little less than a snare of the devil. According to the Friends, all the Lord’s children are now prophets, and yet how few of them prophesy! and these how seldom! and how short their communications! and how unsatisfactory, according to their own account! for when the Friends have their present silent condition pressed home as a proof of the failure of the system, the answer almost uniformly is, “Such as it is, the less preaching we have the better.” They now make a virtue of necessity, and discover in silent meetings a something superior to the most lively oral communications; and their ministers frequently, on rising to give utterance to what they believe the Spirit has given them to communicate, begin by apologizing for interrupting the worship of the meeting, advancing as a reason, that they would not feel easy to leave without making the proposed communication!

Doubtless all preaching and prayer done in man’s own strength, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, are offensive in the sight of God. But the question is, whether preaching and praying at a *stated time* is necessarily, and *from that single* circumstance, to be regarded as

done in man's carnal and unregenerate will. Such a conclusion,—and it is that of the Friends, as stated by Barclay in his eleventh proposition, and confirmed by the declarations and practices of the Friends at the present day,—condemns as “abominable idolatry, superstition and will-worship,” * the life-long and eminently successful labours of many of the most holy and most useful Christian ministers that ever lived—in short, of by far the greater part of the ministers of Christ, both before and since the rise of the Friends. It is by means of such ministry that the cause of Christ has been maintained in the world, and is maintained at the present day; while, with regard to the Friends themselves, whose rise, according to Barclay and others, was but the dawning of a brighter and a better day, in which their silent and expectant theory was to constitute the grand feature of superiority,—it cannot be denied that for a long period their influence has steadily become less, and the inroads that they may be making upon the kingdom of Satan are totally inappreciable, while their own members are, in the mean time, rapidly drafting off into other communities or into the world—or settling down as orthodox Quaker moralists, utterly ignorant of the fire, and the life, and the zeal that animated their forefathers in the truth, and indifferent to anything but the keeping up of those forms in which they have been brought up, and to which, it is to be feared, they almost look for salvation.

The solemnizing effects described by the early Friends as the result of their silent meetings, are rarely known now, except in a very limited degree, while the same effects are every day being experienced from the ordinary mode of conducting the social or congregational worship of Jehovah. Conviction for sin, conversion, comforting of believers, instruction in righteousness—not in so large proportion as is to be desired, but in an incomparably greater degree than amongst the Friends,—is the every-day result. There are many causes at work, which the Friends feel in common with other denominations, deadening the spiritual life of the churches, and prejudicing the world at large against the truth; but all these are totally inadequate to the solution of the question at issue.

* “Apology,” prop. xi.

We are aware that the Friends, acknowledging, as they are compelled to do, the greater activity and success of other bodies, contend that the effect produced is superficial and transitory, and that the standard of piety amongst other Dissenters and the Evangelical portion of the Church of England is very low. We admit that there is some ground for this assertion. The standard of practical piety generally held up, even from our pulpits, is, in many respects, fearfully low, and to a still greater extent imperfect, and the attainments of very many professors fall far short of that which is held up. If, however, the extreme care employed by the Friends in admitting members be borne in mind, and also the fact that their proselytes are ALMOST INVARIABLY persons who, in connexion with other bodies, have already attained to a considerable degree of Christian experience—and that, on the other hand, a large proportion of the converts brought into other churches are persons who have had none of the advantages of a religious education, and often have spent their lives in the grossest ignorance and the most debasing sin,—we might fairly expect a higher standard amongst the Friends. In many respects it is so; though of late years it has, we fear, seriously degenerated, at least in practice; and those who have had the most extensive opportunities for making an unbiased comparison, will be disposed to question the existence of any decided superiority, if the comparison be fairly made. This kind of comparison is, however, at best, an unsatisfactory kind of evidence, from the extreme difficulty of applying it. There are some of the best and some of the worst in every section that could be named. Such characters as Baxter, John Fletcher, Mrs. Fletcher, Legh Richmond, Charles Simeon, might be worthily grouped with the most eminently pious and devoted of the Friends; while, on the other hand, instances of unprincipled meanness, utter want of integrity, gross sensuality and every kind of hypocrisy, could be selected from the lists of those who have once cast in their lot with every section of God's people. The causes of these delinquencies are, for the most part, in operation in every Christian community, and therefore their results can afford little aid in an enquiry like the present. Rather

than raise invidious comparisons, we would mourn over the common lot, and seek by all available means to have the causes removed, in order that the churches may all heartily unite in the one grand design of spreading abroad the truth, and bringing the whole world under its genuine influence.

We have alluded to the more exalted faith exhibited by the man who, in the fear of God, fixes a time to preach and pray, seeks the requisite preparation, and when the time comes, asks and receives the promised aid of the Spirit. It is not, however, that the Friends are deficient in faith. They exercise, in reference to war, a higher amount and kind of faith than almost any other community of Christians; and the result has proved that their confidence has not been misplaced; but with regard to the particular under consideration, from an error of judgment their faith has been misdirected; they have failed to apply to the promised aid of the Spirit, for stated opportunities, that faith which they exercise on other occasions. On this very point, they have expended an amount of faith in expectant waiting, with its painfully intermittent and steadily decreasing results, which, if thrown into the regular and stated preaching of the Gospel, would, in all probability, have kept them what they once were, first and foremost in the great work of evangelization. This partial or improper direction of faith is not peculiar to the Friends. The Romanist exercises faith, strong enough to all intents and purposes; but then it is not fixed on the right objects. The Wesleyan falls just as far short of the Friend in relation to war, as he takes the lead in reference to the gift of the Spirit. Here the reluctant grasp of the Friend shrinks back from the appropriating act, and he waits in fruitless inaction, rejecting the means. The other equally *waits*, but it is in a different manner; while he waits he works, he fasts, but he prays too; as the husbandman *waits* for the early and the latter rain, but does not neglect to plough and manure the soil and to sow the seed—so he wrestles in earnest prayer, using all the known means for gaining his object, and rests not until the promised aid arrives. “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall

prosper either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.”
—Eccles. xi. 6.

We cannot do better than conclude this chapter by a quotation from Dr. Kitto, whose use of the term “wait” is an excellent commentary on the sentiments to which we have just given expression :

“ ‘They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.’

“Thirty years ago, before the Lord caused me to wander from my father’s house, and from my native place, I put my mark upon this passage in Isaiah,—‘I am the Lord: they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.’ Of the many books I now possess, the Bible that bears this mark is the only one that belonged to me at that time. It now lies before me; and I find that although the hair that was then dark as night, has, meanwhile, become a ‘sable silvered,’ the ink which marked this passage has grown into intensity of blackness as the time advanced, corresponding with, and, in fact, recording, the growing intensity of the conviction, that they shall not be ashamed that trust in Thee. I believed it then, but now I know it; and I can write *probatum est* with my whole heart over against the symbol which that mark is to me of my ancient faith,—‘They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.’ Looking back through the long period that has passed since I set my mark to these words—a portion of life which forms the best and brightest, as well as the most trying and conflicting, in all man’s experience—it is a joy to be able to say, ‘I have waited for Thee, and have not been ashamed.’ Under many perilous circumstances, in many most trying scenes, amidst fainting within and fears without, and under sorrows that rend the heart, and troubles that crush it down, I have waited for Thee; and lo! I stand this day as one not ashamed.”

CHAPTER IX.

DEVOTIONAL SINGING.

"To believe as I *do*, that some of our congregation are in an unregenerate state, how must *their* silent meetings be past? And for the babes in Christ I have great fears, inasmuch as true, solemn, silent worship is a very high administration of spiritual worship. I frequently fear for such, that more *external* aid is wanted, though I see not how it is to be given. I also feel the want of each one openly uniting in some external act of worship, for there is much in taking an absolute part in what is doing, to feel a full interest in it."—ELIZABETH FRY.

INTIMATELY connected with the subject of the foregoing chapter is devotional singing—a means which, in all ages, has been regarded as important in awakening and sustaining the life of the soul, and in the rejection of which we believe must be recognized another element of the decline of the Friends. Not carefully discriminating between the use and the abuse, they have, we think, in this instance, discarded an instrumentality which, though liable to abuse, exerts, nevertheless, when properly employed, so powerful and uniform a tendency for good, and is recommended by such high sanctions, that the wiser part would seem to be, not to reject altogether, but to endeavour to control, to regulate, and to direct.

If it can be shown that the tendency of any custom is decidedly and essentially bad, or that the evil resulting from it decidedly preponderates over the good, then its total rejection becomes the dictate of sound discretion. This, we think, is far from being the case with regard to devotional singing. On the contrary, it would not be difficult to show, that its employment has been eminently blessed to the Churches of Christ throughout the world. If this be the case, it follows that no society of Christians can neglect such means without a corresponding loss. That the Friends have seriously suffered from this cause, many of their most conscientious and judicious members now believe. It has deprived them of a valuable means of enlisting and securing the attention of the young and the indifferent, of

rousing the dormant zeal, and bracing up the listless souls of more experienced believers—and of storing the minds of all with the most precious truths and sentiments, in a convenient and attractive form, applicable to all the emergencies of life; thus shutting out, on the one hand, listlessness and wandering thoughts, and, on the other, sentiments of injurious tendency, which are incomparably less likely to find their way into the mind pre-occupied with ideas of a superior character.

The objection that in congregational singing, persons often say what they do not feel, and express sentiments that they do not entertain, is one which the Friends consider in itself sufficient to condemn the practice entirely. This, however, is carrying matters to a very great length. On the same principle, it would be wrong for any-one to read aloud any portion of Scripture—a devotional portion for instance, unless he was in precisely the condition and circumstances which it describes. That there is a tendency to abuse in this respect, the thoughtful of every denomination are fully aware, especially where professional choirs are engaged, and where the music is made a prominent object. But these are by no means inseparable concomitants of devotional singing. If the grand object be not display and attraction, but, as it ought to be in all meetings for worship, the glory of God, the expression of feelings of devotion where they exist, and the awakening of them when not already there—then will the simple human voice, with a moderate proficiency in the art of singing, where the whole congregation join heartily and equally, be all that is required, and, unaccompanied by the organ, or the viol, or the artistic exhibitions of the professional singer, will be far more likely to promote the end in view than anything of a more artificial character.

The evil complained of would thus have very little place, and might be reduced to a minimum by cultivating in the minds of the congregation such a sense of the importance of the occasion, and the necessity for entering upon it in a right spirit, as cannot fail to recommend itself to every rightly-minded worshipper. Then, too, it should be borne in mind, that no individual is in any way *required* to

join in every portion that is sung; he may at any time desist from the expression of a sentiment with which he feels inability to unite. This liberty is constantly exercised by persons of discrimination, and it is not uncommon for the minister to put the congregation on their guard in this very particular. It is possible, too, that some persons may, with the best of motives, be too fastidious in this respect, for want of a just appreciation of the nature of the exercise. In united worship, the members are not acting for themselves exclusively, and that may be perfectly true of the congregation, or of some portion of it, which is not *at the time* applicable to each individual. The sentiment, then, is expressed as the sentiment of the congregation, and not necessarily of every particular individual; and in that capacity will doubtless be regarded by that All-seeing Object of worship, who knows the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is thus that the minister expresses the various conditions of his congregation in prayer; it was thus that Daniel confessed sins on behalf of the Jewish nation, of which, as an individual, he was altogether innocent; and it was thus that Paul in the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, in order to describe more graphically the carnal state from which he had been delivered by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, says, "But I am carnal, sold under sin," v. 14, and so to the end of the chapter; the opposite condition of them that are in Christ Jesus being reserved for the next chapter. There is another important consideration in connexion with this subject, which must not be overlooked. It is this—that the very fact of expressing any given sentiment in words has a tendency to awaken the sentiment in the mind where it did not exist before, or to strengthen it where it was but feebly operative. This tendency is so fully appreciated with regard to *improper and injurious* sentiments, that the Friends have based upon it one of their principal objections to music. They are, however, very reluctant to admit, that the same law of our nature comes into operation with reference to beneficial sentiments, and that good ideas are just as likely to fix themselves upon the well-disposed mind, and to produce their legitimate effects on the character, as bad ones. The effect actually produced is but feebly appreciated by the super-

ficial thinker; but those who know most of the lives and the death-bed scenes of Christians, will know full well how much of the instruction, the comfort, the warning, by which the spiritual life is sustained, are derived through the songs of Zion first learned in the great congregation. The effect might be shown in another way. Let the minister in one of our chapels give out, by way of experiment, a verse containing some irreverent or even common-place sentiment, instead of the accustomed devotional lines; the sensation produced would soon convince the most sceptical, though an individual here and there might be indifferent, how completely the previous state of feeling in the congregation had been in harmony with the expressions they were using.

Many are the instances in which words used on these occasions by the worldly and indifferent have so fastened upon their hearts, as to be the means of awakening conviction that has never been effaced, but which has proved, under the Divine blessing, the first step towards a thorough conversion and an entire change of heart. It is, in fact, incontrovertible, that hundreds of persons have thus dated their first convictions from the singing of a line or two of some hymn; hundreds more have, under the same circumstances, first known God's pardoning and reconciled love, and stepped out of the bondage of sin into the glorious liberty of God's children. Eternity alone will declare the amazing influence for good that the exalted and exalting sentiments of our holy religion have exerted, through the instrumentality of congregational singing. Multitudes of believers have discovered, in some single verse of a hymn, a casket for the gem of sacred truth that has been made a blessing to their souls; giving, as it were, a portable form to the truths, rendering them easily producible in every emergency, connecting by the law of association the time of temptation, of danger, or of affliction, with the hallowed seasons of social prayer and praise, and affording a ready mode of expression to the feelings, whether of need, of thanksgiving, of adoration, or of triumph, in the hour of victory over the Christian's latest foe.

If every Christian is to live in the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit, if he is to be "sober and vigilant," to maintain a state of constant

recollectedness at all times, so far from having to wait for fitness, he will go to his place of worship in a frame of mind which fits him to engage in the service of the sanctuary. The very same state of preparedness which is allowed to be, nay, insisted on as, necessary to fit the Friend for profitably entering on his silent devotions, will as effectually prepare the devout of other denominations for engaging in the reading of the Scriptures, the hymn, or the social prayer. Every devout attender at an ordinary place of worship knows full well, by happy experience, that the preliminary hymn, if rightly engaged in, effectually secures that state of recollectedness and prostration of soul which the Friends seek to secure by their silent waiting; and those who have tried both systems will, with very few exceptions, give their testimony in favour of that service in which the congregation have the opportunity of expressing with the voice, in concert, those feelings and sentiments which every true believer must be, more or less, fully able to unite in.

CHAPTER X.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

"The same spiritual light which made a future Redeemer present to Isaiah, is needful to make a past Redeemer present to the Christian preacher. Without it, the one might have had an expectation, and the other might have a belief; but neither could burn and melt as in the presence of a living, loving, redeeming Prince of Peace. The spirit of prophecy illuminated the future to the one, and illuminated the past to the other—gave that which was a promise the force of a thing done, and gives that which is a record the force of a thing now doing."—ARTHUR'S "TONGUE OF FIRE."

ENGLAND has always been the stronghold of religious liberty, the cradle of religious truth, and the vantage-ground of evangelical progress. The zeal and the faithful endurance of the primitive Churches in Britain—the struggles of Henry II. and the constitutions of Clarendon—the law of mortmain passed during the reign of Edward I.,

with other movements of like nature, prove the existence in the English character of an element which renders it peculiarly averse to religious domination. This very same element, which led to the hearty reception of Wickliffe and his followers, and which rendered the reformation under (not by) Henry VIII. possible, also prepared for the reception of the teachings of George Fox, George Whitehead, William Penn, and Edward Burrough. The arising of the Friends was but another wave of that tide of progress toward religious freedom of action and religious purity of doctrine, for which the faithful few have ever been striving. Nor has that class of mind ever been wanting. It was ready to receive the teachings of Wesley and Rowland Hill; it exists now. Indeed there is reason to believe that persons prepared for advanced views would now be found at least as numerous as ever, if not more so. There is, amongst a large class, scattered through the various sects, or conscientiously declining to unite with any that exist, the same impatience of formalism and priestcraft, the same longing after pure spiritual truth, the same abhorrence of the grievous admixture of worldly views and habits, which has become so fearfully prevalent in the various churches. The tendency that prevails on the other hand, in some directions, towards formalism of the most insidious and fatal character, and which, indeed, is eating out what little life remained in many portions of the Church, while, in the minds of the enlightened it produces a reaction in favour of something more spiritual,—is silently and imperceptibly, but steadily and effectually, spreading its soporific influence over the souls of the unwary, and loudly calls for a counteracting influence such as the Friends are peculiarly calculated to exert; and such as their preaching, had it been systematic, copious, and faithful, would most effectually have exerted.

The views of the Friends with regard to the unlawfulness of war to Christians, although as unpopular as ever in certain directions, would, nevertheless, if faithfully preached, be heartily embraced by thousands who are now totally strangers to them. Peace societies have their influence, though of late we fear that they have given way to a similar lethargic spirit to that of the Friends—their light shines

neither so strongly nor so clearly as it once did. The lecture and the tract, good as they are, are feeble instrumentalities, as compared with the pulpit. Until some religious society not only acts out, but systematically and industriously preaches, the great doctrine of forgiveness of enemies, the nature of the Christian's weapons "not carnal but spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," and the total incompatibility of war with Christianity, the labours of the Peace Society will, we fear, be, comparatively speaking, in vain.

People go to a place of worship with a certain preparation of mind—it does not require a special announcement for the occasion—they attend where they have sufficient confidence in the teacher and sympathy with his general views, to admit of their expecting benefit from his teachings. Let a preacher, by his intelligent and truly spiritual discourse, and by his consistent life and conduct, recommend himself to the confidence of persons who are really seeking light and advancement in their religious career, and the utterances of that man come recommended by a sanction and a weight of authority which no other combination of circumstances can give to the efforts of man seeking to persuade or convince his fellow. It is under teaching such as this that the Holy Ghost may most reasonably be expected to seal conviction on the heart, to mould and regulate the desires and affections into harmony with the Spirit of Christ, and to lead the earnest seeker into all truth.

Here again is seen the vast importance of having regularly acknowledged and paid teachers who can act out the exhortation of Paul to Timothy, "Thou, O man of God, give thyself wholly to these things." Such a provision is so absolutely essential to the development and conservation and diffusion of the truth, that we may safely predict the gradual and irremediable decline, and final extinction, of any institution or society that neglects, for whatever reason, to make such provision.

There is no reason why such an arrangement should prevent the provision of opportunities for those spontaneous utterances that the Friends prize so highly—when "all may speak and all be edified."

Indeed, it will be found that this kind of utterance, instead of being prevented or superseded by the stated ministry, will, if suitable opportunities are afforded, be more *vigorous*, and *lively*, and *GENERAL*, where it is connected with and sustained by the regular preaching of the Gospel. That there were meetings of this kind in the apostolic days requires no proof. There were also deliberative assemblies very closely resembling the Friends' meetings for discipline, when the Apostles and elders, with the whole church, discussed and settled the questions affecting the maintenance of Gospel order, as they arose. But there is abundant evidence to prove, that on other occasions one man occupied the chief part, and often the whole, of the time. In fact, in the very nature of things this must have been so—as when Paul and Barnabas, or Paul and Silas, set out to preach,* often where there were no prophets at all, nor any church to share with them in the labour and the benefits of edifying discourse. The meetings on which *exclusively* the Friends have founded their system, were for mutual edification, instruction, and encouragement, as may be clearly seen, 1 Cor. xiv., where the apostle describes an assembly of the whole church, and supposes the casual entrance of the unlearned or unbelievers. He urges the advantage of prophecy over speaking with unknown tongues, because it was more likely to benefit the assembly in general; but he shows that it was for the most part an assembly of believers, for he adds, v. 31, “For ye may *all* prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.” The present state of the Friends shows as complete a departure from this model as the one-man system to which they are so inveterately opposed. According to this standard, every believer should be in a condition to prophesy, at least occasionally; whereas the actual state of things presents a spectacle of the whole waiting in silence, and depending as completely on the one or two “acknowledged” ministers, as other denominations do on the regularly appointed preacher. A good Wesleyan love-feast forms an incomparably closer approximation to the model of Paul—where the whole time is occupied in fervent, heartfelt,

* Paul at Athens—at Ephesus till break of day—at Miletus to the elders of the Ephesian Church.

impulsive testimonies to the goodness of God, the efficacy of his pardoning grace in Christ Jesus, and the blessedness of a life of dedication to Him. On such occasions the difficulty often consists in finding opportunity for one half that are willing—although the time occupied by each speaker is made as short as may be—while, in the best specimens of the Friends' meetings in these days, a large portion of the time is almost invariably spent in silence, and the communications are, with *very rare exceptions*, limited to the acknowledged ministers.

As the Friends appear to have erred in neglecting the preaching of the Gospel in favour of these prophetic utterances in the meetings of the *Church*, so we think that other denominations have suffered from not combining with their preaching certain meetings of the description now under consideration. They would afford a most seasonable relief to the minister, would often be extremely encouraging to him, as giving evidence of the fruits of his labours; and they would afford excellent opportunities for the exercise of incipient gifts in any of the members, from which, by judicious encouragement, a succession of ministers and unpaid evangelists might be systematically brought forward.

It is clear from other portions of the writings of Paul, that he did not regard the gatherings to which we have just referred, as in any way superseding a provision for the systematic preaching of the Gospel. On the contrary, in his Epistles to Titus and to Timothy he gives express instructions for the carrying out of that object. "The things that THOU hast heard of ME among many witnesses, the same COMMIT THOU TO FAITHFUL MEN, who shall be able to teach others also." Here was a selection by Paul of Timothy, and by Timothy of faithful men. Very different this from the system of the Friends, who decline, on principle, to take any part in the *selection, preparation*, or bringing out of their ministers. Here is not only selection, but preparatory instruction to fit them for their work. Here are the elements of the training system which both false and true churches have adopted as a means of spreading their principles, TOO POWERFUL for GOOD or for EVIL to be neglected by the one or the other, and on which, in short, their chief dependence,

in so far as instrumentality is concerned, has always been placed. Even the persecuting churches that call in the aid of the civil magistrate to punish the refractory and compel conformity, still sedulously cultivate the influence of the recognized teacher. Much more, then, must those churches that trust to the force of truth alone, under God's blessing, be assiduous in cherishing all legitimate instrumentalities, and especially that of regular teachers, in order to cope with all the false teaching against which the truth has to contend, in addition to the natural depravity of the human heart and the gross ignorance that prevails on every hand. Those who know anything of the tendencies of human nature will be fully alive to the fact, that people in general are incomparably more liable to be influenced by a false, and perhaps seductive, doctrine that is incessantly being pressed upon their attention, than by the most sublime, and saving, and delightful truths of which they rarely or never hear a word spoken.

It is in accordance with this principle that Columba, at Icolmkill, and Wickliffe, first *instructed*, and then *appointed*, such as they thought likely; sending them out, or giving them appointments nearer home, according to their qualifications and the pointings of the Spirit; in subordination to which—not in opposition to, or independence of, its influence—this work must be carried on, if it succeed at all. It is to the very same kind of instrumentality that the great and widely-extended success of the Wesleyan body is, under God, mainly attributable; and it is a remarkable fact, that, with all the Friends have said about unpaid ministry and non-necessity for a regular education, the Wesleyans are doing a work in this country and throughout the world, by means of unpaid—unclerical preachers, in comparison with which the whole of the labours of the Friends for the salvation of sinners and the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom sink completely into the shade. We know of country villages where the services of the Established Church are limited to one during the entire week, and where the itinerant Wesleyan minister is not heard probably oftener than once in three months—where the work is almost entirely sustained by unpaid preachers, who, many of them, have had no educational advantages, and who are immersed in the

cares and toils of business through the livelong week; and yet in each of these places there is a band of sincere, earnest, simple-hearted believers—many of them men who, by God's blessing on this very instrumentality, have been brought from the most abandoned lives of sin, but who now by their zeal, their intelligent appreciation of Scripture truth, their minute acquaintance with Holy Scripture, and their zeal for God's glory and the good of their race, would do honour to the most highly privileged churches in our land. Such a work the Friends once achieved; but it has almost entirely died out of such localities, and nothing but a similar instrumentality is likely ever to restore it. We are told that the difficulties of the Friends in rural districts are great and peculiar, on account of tithes, &c., &c., and that many of them have emigrated on that account. This may be true, but it does not meet the case. The difficulties of the Friends in the time of Fox and Penn were ten thousand times greater, and yet they flourished—yes, in those very rural districts which their degenerate descendants find, in these times of general favour and indulgence, too strait for them! Alas, no! there must be other cause than this, or anything akin to it, for the dying out of such a people as the Friends once were. The Wesleyans have emigrated from similar districts, at least as freely as the Friends. A few years ago they were diminishing in numbers in this country—partly from the great rush of emigration, partly from the spirit of reform—but they have been steadily increasing again for several years past, and genuine conversions are constantly taking place in city and in country—often in one small place exceeding in number all that the Friends receive in a whole year on the ground of *convincement* throughout the kingdom. If it be said that there are more Friends in America, we reply, the Wesleyans preponderate there just as largely as they do here; so that this kind of explanation evidently does not meet the case. It is the diligent hand that maketh rich, in spiritual as well as in temporal matters; we must use the means, if we expect God to vouchsafe the blessing.

The Friends are thoroughly conscious of the failure of their ministry. This palpable failure they usually attribute to the worldly

spirit that has crept in, the want of individual faithfulness, or anything that would obviate the painful necessity of suspecting the correctness of their views with regard to what they consider their fundamental doctrines. J. J. Gurney resorts to the idea that the Lord deals with his churches as with individuals, putting them through various processes to try their graces and their faith. The failure of the ministry, then, after two hundred years of systematic refusal to cultivate it, and equally systematic labours to inculcate the sovereign efficacy and imperative obligation of their system of silent waiting, is to be regarded as a dispensation from the Great Head of the Church. This idea, if received and acted upon, will, of necessity, have the effect of increasing the evil complained of; for the silence thus grows by what it feeds on, and will reproduce itself without end—unless, indeed, they should be led to seek the cause of the evil deplored in the right quarter, and apply an efficient remedy.

Our heavenly Father never chastises his children but for their profit. From every fresh visitation some fresh lesson is to be learned. But societies, as well as individuals, will fail to discover the lesson designed, unless they are willing to be utterly abased. All that is of man must be brought into the dust, and the whole fabric searched, to the *very* FOUNDATIONS, in order that whatever of man is usurping the place of the Divine may be removed. The foundation of Christianity remains for ever the same,—it is divine; but a society is something of *man's construction*, and wherever the human element has entrance, there suspicion may fairly be entertained, when the carefully organized system fails, that man's conclusions have, in some measure, taken the place of God's teachings. We do not wonder at the reluctance of the Friends to look so deep for the cause of their present anomalous position. It is easy to acknowledge that we have committed an inadvertent error, or been unfaithful to what we professed—that we have not lived up to our standard; but to allow that we have all the time been lifting up a false standard, and that there has been an error of judgment with regard to that which we have recommended so strongly, defended at such cost, and regarded as of such vital importance—nay, that in which we have supposed our

distinguished excellency to reside—this involves a shaking of the natural man, a violence to the laws of association and of habit, a loosening of prejudice long established, to which none but the very humblest and most sincere adherents of truth could submit without extreme reluctance. Hence the Friends decline to suspect that the doctrine of silent waiting, with all that it involves in connexion with the ministry, has anything to do with their present fruitless condition, and, with a martyr spirit worthy of a better cause, resolve to live or die as a Society by this peculiar doctrine. “No man when he hath tasted old wine straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better.”

This devotion to the colours while the ship is sinking, though very common amongst the Friends, is not, however, universally entertained. Indeed, a very large proportion of the younger members, and some of the older ones, are deeply feeling the need of more spiritual instruction and care, and are looking in every direction, and asking, as the people did in Wickliffe’s time, for the bread of life. The false teachers in those days substituted fables and false philosophy; the Friends inculcate silence and expectant resignation. But the one remedy is no more adapted to the present age than the other was to former times. The general diffusion of education and of literary and scientific knowledge, and the mental culture of which the young Friends are feeling the benefit, while increasing the facility with which they mingle in the world around them, render them painfully and increasingly sensible of the extremely meagre and imperfect character of the instructions provided for them in connexion with the solemn affairs of the Divine life in the soul, and of the world to come. The very advantages that they have at the schools of the Society, in the Bible culture there pursued, and in the place of which there is nothing adequate presented to them on leaving school, makes them more keenly sensible of their spiritual destitution. On the other hand, there are devout and well-informed preachers of evangelical truth, whose instructions, however deficient on some of the great points of Christian morality and church polity, still afford far more of that spiritual aliment for which the young

mind is hungering and thirsting, than is to be found in their own silent meetings, occasional exhortations, and very rare and always imperfect expositions of Christian doctrine. No wonder, then, that the younger members are leaving the Society at a fearfully rapid rate, and joining any section of the Church where they see a probability of obtaining more of that help which, as an instrument in God's hand, man is designed to convey to his fellow-man in spiritual matters, but which their own system nevertheless denies them. Out of one family known to the writer, the immediate descendants of six brothers and sisters, all of them brought up amongst the decidedly orthodox, and under the best influences that the Society affords, SEVENTEEN have joined the Church of England, and two the Wesleyans: several others are decidedly tending in similar directions, though not old enough to decide for themselves; while of the few that remain attached to the Friends, some are for the most part indifferent to the affairs of the unseen world, and those that are awake on these momentous affairs, are constantly lamenting the paucity and meagreness of their opportunities for obtaining spiritual instruction and encouragement adequate to their need. That young Friends are not adequately and effectually impressed with the distinguishing principles of the Society, is clear from the manner in which they join other communities, just as local circumstances give the bias; almost invariably giving up the spiritual views of the Society with regard to water baptism and the "Lord's supper," war, oaths, &c., &c. The Friends themselves have always fatally connected this degeneracy with what are called the "minor peculiarities," viz., of dress and manners—their argument being, that want of consistency in these particulars leads the way to disregard of more important matters. We shall have to take up this subject hereafter: suffice it for the present to observe, that this cannot possibly account for the facts of the case. Were the young people adequately impressed with the true nature of their high calling in reference to the spirituality of their views, no deviation in such minor matters as dress would be sufficient to break down the line of demarcation between their own eminently spiritual and voluntary system, and

the formalism and compulsory support of a war-sanctioning State-Church, or the still more corrupt system of Rome. The great lesson which these phenomena are calculated to teach, is, we believe, the utter futility of hoping to conserve, much less to spread abroad, any system of faith and practice, without a regularly organized and constantly active system of teaching, especially that kind of teaching which in all ages has been owned as the most approved and most effectual means by which man can influence the belief and the practices of his fellow-man—the LIVING VOICE employed in that most authoritative, impressive, and persuasive of its functions, the preaching of the Gospel. The Friend who, to defend his indifference to this grand instrumentality, says, “I have my Bible, and I can hold intercourse with my heavenly Father in outward silence, whether alone or in the solemn meeting,” is blind alike to the wants of a perishing world, his own spiritual requirements, and the true philosophy of the mode of operation which God himself has ordained for the regeneration of the race, and the individual’s growth in grace, in knowledge, and in fruit-bearing.

CHAPTER XI.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

"O ! that the world might taste and see
 The riches of his grace !
 The arms of love that compass me,
 Would all mankind embrace.

- His only righteousness I know,
 His only truth proclaim :
 'Tis all my business here below,
 To cry ' Behold the Lamb !'

Happy, if with my latest breath,
 I may but gasp his name ;
 Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
 ' Behold, behold the Lamb !' "

It is deeply to be regretted, that the peculiar views of the Society of Friends on the subject of the ministry, should have led them so far to limit the operations of the Spirit, as to prevent their acknowledging as true Gospel ministry the preaching of other denominations, even where it has been eminently blessed to the producing of results similar to those which they have found to accompany their own services in their more lively times, and which results they themselves bring forward as a satisfactory proof that theirs is the right system. That it is in many respects right, we do not deny ; but that it is THE right system, to the exclusion or condemnation of others, or that either the one or the other is so far right as to be capable of no improvement, we think is open to very serious question. On the contrary, we think that a combination of some of the distinguishing DOCTRINES of the Friends with the best parts of the INSTRUMENTALITIES of other denominations, carefully guarded from the evils of both by consulting the sacred oracles in connexion with the result of past experiment, would result in the formation of a Christian community superior to anything that the world has ever seen since the apostolic

age, in purity, and life, and power. Such an organization is the want of the age. There is no organization existing that fully satisfies its own more earnest and enlightened members. Many of the adherents of other churches are as much dissatisfied with the remains of formalism and priestcraft that they embody, as the Friends can be with their present prostrate condition. The want of both is an organization which, while divested of the priestly and man-exalting tendency of which the Friends are so justly jealous, shall, at the same time, by systematic PREACHING and TEACHING, secure the great ends of organization, the conservation and diffusion of truth.

The following sentiment of J. J. Gurney, if fully acted on by the Friends, would soon break down the icy barrier that now exists between them and other churches, and enable them to sympathize and to co-operate in the great work of evangelization, without any compromise of principle on either hand:—"The one thing needful is LIFE in religion—its vital operation is on the hearts of individuals; and if this necessary work is experienced—if the leaven which quickens the dead souls of responsible men does but spread, ALL QUESTIONS respecting MODES of worship, and all that comes under the head of religious polity, must be regarded as COMPARATIVELY UNIMPORTANT." This admission ought at least to enable the Friends to recognize as Christian ministry that which, however different from their own in theory, is constantly producing, under God's blessing and sustaining, this very life of religion. At the same time, it will be seen, that in so far as modes of worship may be more or less adapted to secure or to frustrate that end, they must be regarded as important.

It would seem as though J. J. G. felt conscious of this truth, though his application of it would be very different from our own; for he goes on to say, that it is best, nevertheless, to adhere to truth and principle, and adds, that if this were done with regard to the Christian ministry, "the result would be a far wider and deeper flowing of the water of life than has hitherto been experienced since the days of primitive Christianity. The sacred stream which flows from under the throne of God and of the Lamb, instead of being *bricked up in particular channels, and confined within certain pre-*

cinets by the CAPRICE AND PREJUDICE of man, would diffuse itself, by a divine and unrestrictive energy, on every side." Admirable sentiment! but how differently it will be applied by equally earnest men whose stand-point is different. The Friend thinks immediately, and very justly, of the limitation placed upon the preaching of the Gospel by those hierarchies which maintain that none can lawfully take upon him the office of public preacher unless he have been "lawfully called and sent," *i. e.* by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard—none, in short, who have not received the gift by the laying on of hands in a direct line from Peter himself!!

To thousands, however, who do not believe in priestly ordination, but who consider a call from the Great Master himself as ample warrant for going forth in His name, and who believe that such a call is not only sufficient, but indispensably necessary, and that the aid of the Holy Ghost, and an experimental acquaintance with the truths of the Gospel, are not less essential,—the language just quoted would seem most strikingly to describe the views and practices of the Friends themselves, who, by their fanciful explanation of the *MODE* in which the Holy Spirit's aid is to be sought, do, as effectually as the other, though unintentionally, confine the sacred stream within certain precincts marked out by the *caprice* and *prejudice of man*. So much contracted has now become the particular channel in which their share of the sacred stream is wont to flow, that the stream itself has gradually dwindled from the full, broad river of two hundred years ago, to a small, insignificant, intermittent stream, which painfully threatens to be altogether lost in the sandy, or rocky, or brick bed that confines it; while the fuller effusions from the fountain ever-flowing still find their way through channels somewhat less pure, it may be, but not so narrow; the nations of the earth still drink of its streams, and millions of men and women have lived and died rejoicing in the Christian faith, who, in all human probability, would never have heard the "glad tidings," had it not been for the labours of men whom the orthodox Quaker would feel compelled to regard as man-made, and therefore false, ministers—wolves among the flock.

It is too notorious to require any proof, that the spread and the revival of religion, wherever it has taken place, has resulted, under God's blessing, mainly from these two causes,—the diffusion of the written word, and the oral proclamation of the truths of the Gospel. It is useless to stand upon the question, whether the gift is to be called prophesying, preaching, or teaching; or as to the precise amount of the Spirit's influence required to constitute a sound Gospel ministry. "The tree is known by its fruits." If the ministry of the Friends is of that superior character that it professes to be, the result should certainly correspond. If, as Barclay says, the person possessed of this heavenly influence can at once detect a false quotation from Scripture, or even an erroneous translation,* the individual possessed of such an unerring "test and touchstone" ought surely to give proofs that his prophetic utterances are of the character which he claims for them. What, we would ask, is the character of the ministry of the Friends at the present day? Does it, to any satisfactory extent, fulfil the conditions or produce the fruits that we are warranted to expect from a system that they would fain persuade us is far superior to, and more apostolic than, that of Wickliffe or Luther, Hill or Wesley? When Peter preached, three thousand were converted in a day; in the early days of the Friends multitudes were converted; the same under Wesley and Rowland Hill. We know a locality where, during one quarter of the present year, one hundred and thirty conversions took place in connexion with the preaching of one society. Can the Friends, we ask, bring forward anything like that, as the result of the united labours of all their ministers throughout the Kingdom during the past twelvemonth?

In foreign lands, in the far-off islands of the sea, where the missionary has gone, labouring amongst the most besotted and benighted of mankind, idolatry has vanished; its foul orgies, in which brutal lust and blind ferocity are blended with superstitious fear, have given place to a tone of morality and of legislation that would put to shame the most civilized states of Europe. Multitudes that, forty years ago, were worshipping stocks and stones, and images

* "Apology," p. 77.

of their own fabrication, now engage in the worship of the true God, and rejoice in the glorious liberty of the children of God, that liberty which the "truth as it is in Jesus alone can communicate." The wretched negro, toiling under a brutal and selfish taskmaster, deprived of every social right and privilege, has learned from the preaching of the despised Methodists to rise superior to the terrible and degrading circumstances in which he finds himself; has stood erect, a moral freeman, and learned to endure his horrid wrongs with a martyr's firmness, in the anticipation of that glorious Canaan to which he turns his longing eyes, and of which he sings, and dreams, and talks, until he forgets his griefs and remembers his misery no more.

The Friends have effectually shown their love for the African race—their zeal for the oppressed of every clime and every colour. The appeal—"Am I not a man and a brother?" has never been made to them in vain, and yet how little have they done for the direct promulgation of Gospel truth amongst the heathen! Had their theory of preaching been all that they have imagined, the effects should have ever been widening and deepening, and the result of that dawning, that day-spring that Barclay and Fox announced two hundred years ago, should have been palpable to the whole world, a living epistle known and read of all men.

Any one who will read the journal of George Whitehead will see that in those early days, their very rising, the Friends were indeed a city set on a hill that could not be hid. They found access then to thrones and legislative assemblies, and they poured their appeals on behalf of the oppressed, and their solemn and withering denunciations of the sins of their day, hot and glowing, into the ears of the guilty. They ran to and fro through the earth, preaching Christ where He had not so much as been named; and had they organized a ministry THEN, and kept up the kind of influence which made them felt and respected by all classes, from the king upon the throne to the beggar on the dunghill, Quaker doctrines might, by this time, have been heard in the remotest corners of every land under the sun. But in this respect they failed; their peculiar views of the Spirit's

mode of operation were fatal to systematic organization, and their preaching became intermittent, feeble, and limited in quantity; and is now scarcely felt in the world. Even when the ministers of the Society have gone to preach to heathen nations of late years, they have not gone to cut out a path for themselves, but have availed themselves of the opening already made by the persevering, self-sacrificing, faith-testing labours of men to whom the theory of the Friends denies the character of Christian ministers. "Other men laboured, and ye have entered into their labours."

But, in addition to its rarity, the ministry of the Friends in the present day is marked by another feature, which, in all fairness, must be regarded as conclusive against its claim to that superior inspiration we have already alluded to. Short as their communications generally are, and abounding as they do in exhortation rather than doctrine or exposition, it is very common indeed for them to misquote Scripture in such a manner as not merely to interfere with, but actually to oppose, the meaning of the passage; showing the utter absence of any critical, or even careful, examination of its true bearing. Trusting to supernatural aid for that which prayerful study would have been sufficient to give, they have lost the advantage of both. If the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit is to be expected—and we as firmly believe this as any Friend can do—it is reasonable to expect it not as a substitute for, but as an aid to, our own best employment of the aids already placed within our reach, and urged upon our diligent attention by positive commands. That the present charge may not appear to be without foundation, invidious as the task may be, one or two specimens which have come under the writer's own observation shall be given. An eminent minister of the Society, now gone from works to rewards, rarely "appeared" in the ministry without using the words, "I am a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off." Now, this expression conveyed a certain truth which the minister designed to convey, but not that which the prophet had to communicate—not *the* truth. The correct reading is, "Am I a God at hand, said the Lord, and not afar off?" as much as to say, I am a God BOTH at hand and afar off; which

corresponds to the question that immediately follows:—"Can any hide himself in secret places and I shall not see him?" Another very worthy and acceptable minister quoted as the language of David the following lament over that temple which was not built until after David had "fallen on sleep" and been "laid with his fathers:" "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps!!" Another minister, while "travelling with a certificate," quoted from the Epistle to the Hebrews, xi. 39:—"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promises;" the important word *not*, however, was omitted, and the whole scope of the passage entirely lost sight of, as indicated in the following verse:—"God having provided some better thing FOR US, that they without us should NOT BE MADE PERFECT." The true sense of the passage being thus lost sight of, it was, of course, employed in a sense which it could not by any possibility have been designed to bear. An individual concerned for the truth made free respectfully to point out this mistake to the minister afterwards, and received thanks for having done so, accompanied by the acknowledgment that said minister often quoted Scripture incorrectly, and was always glad to be corrected. But this kind of thing is quite incompatible with that immediate teaching which the Friends assert to be necessary for right ministry. We may fairly ask, Is the pretension of Barclay and J. J. Gurney one that cannot be sustained; or is the ministry of the present day so fearfully degenerate as this discrepancy would imply?

At a Quarterly Meeting of the Society, not four years ago, the writer heard one of the most eminent ministers of the Society actually apologize for the deficiency of the ministers in Scriptural knowledge, and urge upon his young hearers the importance of their not being scandalized by any discrepancies or imperfections which their more correct knowledge of the sacred writings might enable them to detect in communications from the gallery. Imagine a Dissenting preacher, even a local brother among the Wesleyans, making such an appeal for the indulgence of his hearers. He would very soon be reminded by some kind friend of the exhortation of

Paul to Timothy—"Thou, O man of God, give thyself wholly to these things." And if he should reply that worldly business left him not sufficient time for the study of those Scriptures by acquaintance with which the man of God is to be made "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works,"* might he not be fairly told, that this confession presents one of the most powerful arguments for some men being enabled and encouraged to separate themselves, as Timothy had to do, entirely for the ministerial calling; and that those who minister occasionally should use all diligence in seeking to be *prepared* rightly to divide the word of truth?

Whatever acquaintance the Friends may have with Scripture, there is no doubt that they suffer much for want of that comprehensive and critical knowledge of sacred truth which results from systematic study carried on for a specific and definite purpose. When we reflect on the great proportion of time spent by them in silence, their reluctance to make religious subjects the topic of conversation, and their aversion to theological study, or anything like preparation for the preaching of the Gospel, we cannot expect it to be otherwise. The most systematic and indefatigable and devout student of holy writ finds himself but upon the threshold, after a long life of earnest application; and the collision of mind with mind in earnest converse constitutes a means of stimulating inquiry and correcting erroneous impressions, without which progress must necessarily be slow, and liability to error incomparably greater than with it. Then, too, there is the advantage of the definite object which stimulates the research of the man who, feeling the solemn nature of the undertaking, knows that at a given time it will be his duty to proclaim to others the unsearchable riches of Christ,—an office which, together with the Holy Spirit's aid, calls into operation all the natural and acquired gifts of the most gifted, and which, if entered upon without proper attention to every point calculated to secure its efficiency, cannot be expected to produce the full effect that is designed to result from it.

The weakness of the Friends is peculiarly apparent at this point; they admit the utility of this kind of study, and yet they pride

* 2 Tim. iii. 17.

themselves on their neglect of it, and expect faith to make up to them the deficiency. J. J. Gurney, says:—"Whatever may be our calling in the world, or station in the Church, it is unquestionable that the exercise of our intellectual faculties, and the collecting of useful knowledge, will enlarge our capacity for the service of the Great Master; and on this principle it is to be freely admitted, that learning may produce, COLLATERALLY AND SUBORDINATELY, A HIGHLY DESIRABLE EFFECT, even on the Gospel ministry."* Of course it is collateral and subordinate: we never heard of any kind of Christians that thought otherwise. He goes on:—"Not only may the powers of the mind be strengthened for that and every good purpose, by means of a liberal education, but occasions frequently occur, in which information on various points may be made to subserve the great object of the Christian minister." One would expect, with such a conviction as this of an instrumentality capable of exerting a HIGHLY DESIRABLE effect on the Gospel ministry, the Friends would be delighted in its cultivation; but no! with a strange infatuation, clinging to their own peculiar theory on this point, they reject, or profess to reject, this admitted advantage; and accordingly, only eleven pages further on, we find J. J. Gurney describing the minister among the Friends, when on a journey for the purpose of preaching the gospel,—“Poor and empty in himself, TOTALLY UNPREPARED FOR HIS SUCCESSIVE LABOURS BY PREVIOUS STUDY, he acts on a principle of simple faith in his Governor and Guide.” This declaration either implies that previous study has nothing to do with the qualifications of the minister, which would be a direct contradiction of the assertion (p. 226) which we have just quoted; or that the minister has deliberately neglected that which, in the same declaration, is recognized as a means of enlarging the capacity for the service of the Great Master, and exerting a highly desirable effect on the Christian ministry. Is it not, we would ask, a palpable abuse of simple faith, to expect the blessing while we neglect the means? Whatever success may attend the ministry of the Friends—and we have no wish whatever to under-rate it, there is

* “Observations,” p. 226.

every reason to suppose that it might, with some modifications suggested by the present considerations, have been incomparably more permanently and extensively successful than has been the case, and that their neglect of this admitted source of increased usefulness must have an important bearing on their present anomalous condition.

To the student of mental philosophy it is unnecessary to observe, that whenever the mind is addressed to a given object with a special purpose in view, and the subject pursued in a systematic manner, the result will be much more distinct and complete than from the same amount of labour or time occupied on the same subject without a specific object in view. The very fact, then, of a subject being CHOSEN for development and illustration—a lesson to be impressed—a truth to be established—a duty to be enforced—pre-supposes the most favourable circumstances under which to search the Scriptures. Everyone who has thus selected a text, and sat down prayerfully to its consideration, must have found, that as he compares passage with passage, seeks to arrange his thoughts, to develop the argument, and bring it to bear upon the lesson in view, light will be poured into his own mind—the subject is presented to him with fresh and ever-increasing impressiveness—and, while comparing spiritual things with spiritual, the great truths he desires to impress upon the minds of others will be sealed afresh and with increased power upon his own heart and conscience. We do not see why the Holy Spirit, if still vouchsafed in all the fulness that the Friends claim for it—and we do not come behind them one whit in this respect—may not visit the closet as well as the congregation, and guide the pen of the writer as well as the tongue of the speaker. We think that a spoken discourse, spoken after ample and prayerful consideration, affords by far the best opportunity for MAN'S INSTRUMENTALITY AND GOD'S IMMEDIATE INFLUENCE to be brought into UNITED OPERATION; still we would not deny to the written sermon—where the object has been God's glory and the good of souls, rather than a desire to dazzle by brilliance of thought, and charm by elegance of diction and graceful delivery—the prospect of being made useful in the promotion of God's great work in the hearts of men. A tract has many a time been

made the blessed means of the sinner's awakening and turning to God; how much more, then, a prayerfully-prepared discourse on some great doctrine of salvation, delivered in a devout and prayerful spirit, by the living voice of a holy and Christ-like minister. We doubt not that thousands of conversions have been brought about by God's blessing on such means, and thousands of perplexed and mourning pilgrims relieved of their doubts, comforted in their affliction, and encouraged to press forward with new alacrity in the heavenly journey. Those who prepare their sermons and write them do well; but those who, after equally careful preparation, deliver them from a full heart, unaided by written notes or committal to memory, do incomparably better. Having done all that man can do, the minister who acts on this plan then places himself in the hands of the Great Master, under whose immediate teaching his utterances may be as effectually guided and moulded as if he had made no preparation at all, with this grand advantage—that the intellect and the judgment having done their part, and the spirit of the man being prepared by previous meditation and prayer, he has not to catch at suggestions as they arise, and turn them to account; but the whole is already so arranged in his mind as to admit of its being brought out in the most effective manner. The best discourses of the Friends are grievously deficient in this respect. Very few of them ever attempt to sustain a connected train of thought for twenty minutes; and when they do, they almost invariably lose themselves, repeat the same thought again and again; and not unfrequently miss the right time for sitting down, undoing most effectually in the latter portion of their incoherent discourses by far the greater part of the impression produced by the former. We know that the Friends will think these assertions rather severe; but in an inquiry like the present the truth must be spoken without compromise. We have been stating what is the general rule. There are exceptions; some of their effusions are perfect in their kind; but these exceptions are extremely rare, and they are not at all superior in any respect to the best, and infinitely more common, efforts of the most spiritually-minded ministers of other denominations.

If others over-rate the human element, and attach too much importance to talent and learning, the Friends err as fatally in the opposite extreme, in dispensing as completely as possible with all that is human in the work of the ministry. The grand triumph of Christianity consists in redeeming body and soul and spirit from the power of sin, and enlisting in the service of Christ all the powers of the whole man—physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. The fishermen of Galilee, though illiterate, were made the instruments of amazing good, proving that God's power is independent of great learning or natural powers; but the choice of the apostle Paul as the great apostle of the Gentiles equally shows that God designs to make all human advantages, gifts, and attainments subservient to His great purposes in the redemption of the world from sin.

The extent to which the Friends have of late seen their error in their contempt for human learning and talent is worthy of remark; and could all see it and act upon it as J. J. Gurney has indicated, there might very soon be a complete re-action in the Society. The force of early habit, and the prejudices of education, however, prevent this sentiment from producing any important change in their views and practices. The concessions made by J. J. Gurney would have been viewed by Robert Barclay with extreme jealousy; and by many of his contemporaries he has been regarded as a dangerous innovator. Be this as it may, he has done little or nothing to bring about those changes which would properly result from the altered belief; but has given the whole weight of his authority on the side of a devoted and unchanging adhesion to the silent system, even to the very death of the Society. In the work already alluded to, we find the following concession to the value of human learning:—"The laws of grammar and philology, and the science of exegesis, in all its branches, are open to all mankind, and have actually led to the pouring in of so much light on Scripture as very much to fix its meaning for the permanent benefit of our race." How different this, as well as the extract already given from the "Observations," from the coarse prejudice which finds its way into the discourses of some of the more eminent ministers of the old school who, even to the present day,

persist in paining their intelligent hearers by describing the men who have conferred this boon on the world as "man-made" ministers, and their effusions as stolen from the Bible and other people's writings.

There are thousands of the Friends who remain, to all appearance, strict and orthodox, who will take no steps to bring about a change, but who are thoroughly dissatisfied with the present state of things. They wear the badge, and endure the silent meetings, not from conviction, but solely from the force of educational prejudice, long habit, and that form of ecclesiastical authority which, though emphatically repudiated by the Friends, has, nevertheless, made its appearance, and exerted a very considerable influence over the beliefs and practices of the modern Friends. The possibility of such degeneracy is indicated in the work already referred to, "The Papal and Hierarchical System." The author in his introduction says,—“When I speak of the Papal and Hierarchical System, I do not mean to confine either my own view or that of my readers to the Church of Rome. I speak rather of the system which places man under the rule of man in matters of religion—the laity, more particularly, under the rule of the clergy—so that human wisdom and authority are found in various degrees to usurp the place of pure, divine truth.” Again—“I believe Antichrist may be lurking in almost every existing sect;” and on the next page—“We ought all to look to ourselves, lest anything of the same leaven should be found lurking within our own borders.” We firmly believe that no existing sect is so free from this leaven as the Society of Friends; but we are not the less firmly convinced that the taint is there, and that much of the present feebleness is caused by neglect of means; which neglect has arisen, and is perpetuated, by this very leaning to human authority, the opinions of the propounders of the theory having now authoritatively supplanted and over-ruled the free action of the Society in examining into and rectifying the errors of their system. We are aware, that, while we write, this remark is, in certain directions, becoming daily less applicable. The willingness shown this very year in connexion with the subject of disownment for marriage out of the Society, shows a considerable

loosening of prejudices. It must be borne in mind, however, that the present object is an enquiry into the causes that *have* brought the Society to its present condition; and it still remains to be seen, whether the present shaking will or will not be allowed to extend to the opening out of such questions as “silent waiting” and the ministry. If the present enquiry should be the means in any degree of inducing the Friends to review these important subjects in the same candid spirit with which the marriage question has been approached, the writer will feel that he has not laboured in vain, and will hail the event as the earnest of brighter and better days for the Society, and of inestimable benefit to the world at large.

CHAPTER XII.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL—WICKLIFFE AND LUTHER.

“Your call is not to instruct men in the doctrines and duties of Christianity merely, but to convert them from sin to holiness.”—DR. CLARKE.

“The word of him who has his commission from heaven, shall be as a fire and as a hammer; sinners shall be convinced and converted to God by it.”—“The church or chapel in which the blind or lame are not healed, has no Christ in it, and is not worthy of attendance.”

THE incessant struggle of the reformers of bygone ages to preach, and of the opponents of vital religion to put a stop to this most effectual means of exposing error and promoting the spread of the truth, as seen in the whole history of the Church, proves, more effectually and convincingly than any argument can do, the *essential* importance of preaching as a means of sustaining the vigour, and even the very existence, of the churches. The struggle may be traced from the commencement of the apostles’ labours, when, after the receiving of the Holy Ghost, they set out to fulfil the design of their great Master,—“And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the

earth." They were to go and "teach all nations." They obeyed, and very soon were taken before the magistrates, who, fearing lest "this man's blood" should be brought upon them, "commanded them not to *speaking at all nor preaching* in the name of Jesus."

It was by the preaching of the word, and the translation of the Bible into the vulgar tongue, that Wickliffe so effectually turned the people of England from "dead works" to the living God, and in corresponding measure roused the jealousy of the pope and the cardinals. But Wickliffe did not hesitate to prepare his sermons beforehand, nor to preach at stated times—and yet God signally owned his ministry. "A terrible pestilence, which is said to have carried off half the human race, appeared in England, after successively devastating Asia and the Continent of Europe. This visitation of the Almighty sounded like the trumpet of the judgment-day in the ear of Wickliffe. Alarmed at the thoughts of eternity, the young man—for he was then only twenty-four years old—passed days and nights groaning, and sighing, and calling upon God to show him the path he ought to follow. He found it in the Holy Scriptures, and *resolved to make it known* to others. He commenced with prudence; but being elected in 1361 Warden of Baliol, and in 1365 Warden of Canterbury College also, he began to set forth the doctrine of faith in a more energetic manner. His biblical and philosophical studies, his knowledge of theology, his penetrating mind, the purity of his manners, his unbending courage, rendered him the object of general admiration. A profound teacher and an eloquent preacher, he *demonstrated to the learned during the course of the week what he intended to preach; and on the Sunday he preached to the people* what he had previously demonstrated. His disputations gave strength to his sermons, and his sermons shed light on his disputations. He accused the clergy of having banished the Holy Scriptures, and required that the word of God should be re-established in the Church. Wickliffe continued his uncompromising career, and defended the Crown from the aggressions of Rome." The papacy grew alarmed. Wickliffe was summoned to appear before the Convocation. He appeared before them—but came off unscathed. He then turned his attention

more than ever to the spread of the Gospel by preaching. "To carry the glad tidings into the remotest hamlets was now the great idea that possessed Wickliffe. 'If begging friars,' said he, 'stroll over the country, preaching the legends of the saints and the history of the Trojan war, we must do for God's glory what they do to fill their wallets, and form a vast itinerant evangelization to convert souls to Jesus Christ. Turning to the most pious of his disciples, he said to them, 'Go and preach, it is the sublimest work.' " How different from the Friends—who, because they consider that to call and prepare men for the ministry is the sole prerogative of the Head of the Church, conclude that they are to do nothing, in word or deed, to encourage each other to engage in this blessed work! thus leaving the individual to endure alone, and unaided by divinely-directed human sympathy, the solemn responsibility and the searching process which every one must go through who enters in a right spirit upon the work. "'But,' " he proceeds, "'imitate not the priests whom we see after the sermon sitting in the ale-houses, or at the gaming-tables, or wasting their time in hunting. After your sermon is ended, do you visit the sick, the aged, the poor, the blind, and the lame, and succour them according to your ability.' Such was the new practical theology which Wickliffe inaugurated—it was that of Christ himself." The people thronged around these simple but earnest heralds of the Prince of Peace, and the results were such as no system of forms or types could produce. "Missions of this kind," adds D'Aubigné, to whose work on the Reformation we are indebted for the above particulars, "have constantly revived in England at the great epochs of the Church." Very similar, indeed, were the early days of the Society of Friends, before the silent system had infused its paralysing influence into their operations, and leavened, as it has gradually but effectually done, the whole mass; spreading abroad a spiritual lethargy which has rendered the Society almost as indifferent to the great work with which they set out, as if they really thought that the Gospel had done its work, and that there were no souls perishing around them for lack of that knowledge, which, if they would but shake off this illusion, they are so eminently calculated, under God's blessing, to bestow.

But here, again, the enemies of the truth bear witness to the power of preaching by their jealousy of it. "The clergy became alarmed, and a law was passed, commanding every king's officer to commit the preachers and their followers to prison." But Wickliffe did not trust to this instrumentality alone. He provided the people with the Bible in their own tongue. In 1380 his translation was completed. This was a great event in the religious history of England, who, outstripping the nations of the Continent, took her station in the foremost rank in the great work of disseminating the Scriptures. "The reception of the work surpassed Wickliffe's expectations. The Holy Scriptures exercised a reviving influence over men's hearts; minds were enlightened, souls converted; the voices of the poor priests had done little in comparison with this voice; something new had entered the world. Citizens, soldiers, and the lower classes, welcomed this new era with acclamations; the high-born curiously examined this unknown book; and even Anne of Luxemburg, wife of Richard II., having learned English, began to read the Gospels diligently. She did more than this; she made them known to Arundel, Archbishop of York and Chancellor, and afterwards a persecutor, but who now, struck at the sight of a queen and a foreign lady humbly devoting her leisure to the study of such virtuous books, commenced reading them himself, and rebuked the prelates who neglected this holy pursuit. 'You could not meet two persons on the highway,' says a contemporary writer, 'but one of them was Wickliffe's disciple.'" In one respect the times now differ from those just described. The Bible is now in almost every one's hand; but such is the tendency of people in general to accept just what they are taught, and to accommodate their ideas of duty to their convenience, that the practical teachings of Christ are now as much ignored in many points as ever they were, and it becomes just as necessary for these extraordinary messengers to arise, and startle both teachers and people into a fresh inquiry into what the Bible teaches, as if they had not possessed the Bible at all, or were only familiar with certain limited portions of its contents. In connexion with our dealings of late in India and China, it might be thought

from the tone of our pulpit teaching, whether Church or Dissent, that the royal law of doing to others as we would have them to do to us, had been erased from Heaven's statute-book, and that our forgiveness of our enemies was no longer made an absolute condition of our receiving forgiveness from a just and holy and promise-keeping God; while iniquities of the most gross and heinous description have been sanctioned in the same high quarters, and reconciled with a degenerate and fast degenerating standard of Christian duty, as God's providential way of preparing for the civilization and evangelization of the down-trodden and helpless victims of British cupidity and ambition. The cannon-ball, we are told, is the ploughshare that turns up the soil, and then the missionary follows, and sows the Gospel seed! Men guilty of tampering with the vices of the people, and who are amassing large fortunes by means which spread broadcast the seeds of every vice and every crime that could be mentioned; the knowing proprietors of houses in which the grossest forms of sin are encouraged as a means of making money, may sit in nine-tenths of our churches and chapels from one year's end to another, and never hear a word that is calculated to make them feel uneasy, or doubt for a moment that they are in the direct course for happiness and heaven. If ever there was a time when the voice of the prophet was required to proclaim, alike to rulers, priests, and people, the terrible judgments of God for exalted opportunities lost, and privileges trampled under foot, and means of most extended usefulness shamefully prostituted to the purposes of unrelenting avarice,—such a time is the present. England might read the message of Jonah to that great city Nineveh with vast advantage.

Not less remarkable was the revival of preaching by Martin Luther, at a time when the lectures and casuistic disquisitions of schoolmen had taken the place of the pure Gospel, and when faith in Christ Jesus was set aside for the superstitious and stupid formalism of an apostate Church. No apology is needed for transcribing the following passage entire from D'Aubigné's "Reformation," because it so effectually substantiates the present argument, proving that a stated ministry may be blessed, not with those occasional and scanty visita-

tions merely which Barclay allows, but blessed with signal success, and fraught with results the most important to the whole world—shewing at the same time that the learning which the Friends have so seriously under-rated in connexion with the ministry, may, under the regulating influence of the Holy Spirit, be made subservient to most important ends, otherwise unattainable, and that a very considerable amount of human instrumentality is sometimes employed by the Great Head of the Church, both in preparing and in calling out his chosen servants into their appointed field of labour.

“During his career at Wittemberg, Luther was called to teach physics and logic—an arrangement in which regard was doubtless had to the philosophical studies he had pursued at Erfurt, and the degree he had obtained as Master of Arts. Thus did he find himself, while hungering and thirsting for the word of God, compelled to attend almost exclusively to the study of Aristotle’s scholastic philosophy. He needed the bread of life which God gives to the world, yet was obliged to occupy himself with human subtleties. What a constraint this! and how it must have afflicted him! ‘I am well, by the grace of God,’ writes he, ‘were it not that I have to devote my whole energies to the study of philosophy. I have greatly desired, ever since my coming to Wittemberg, to exchange this branch for that of theology;’ but he adds, that it might not be supposed that he meant the theology of that time,—‘The theology I mean is that which looks for the kernel in the nut, the albumen of the wheat, and the marrow of the bones. Be it as it may,’ he goes on to say with a confidence which was his life’s very soul, ‘man is almost always deceived by the judgments he pronounces; but He is our God. He will kindly conduct us evermore.’ The labours in which Luther had then to engage were of the utmost service to him afterwards, when he had to combat the errors of the schoolmen.

“It was impossible that he could keep to this. It behoved his heart’s desire to be fulfilled. That same power which some years before had driven Luther from the bar to the monastic life, now drove him from philosophy to the Bible. He zealously applied himself to the study of the ancient tongues, chiefly Greek and Hebrew, that thus he might

derive learning and divinity from their proper sources ; * and in such labours his mental constitution enabled him to be indefatigable. Some months after arriving at the University, he applied for the degree of Bachelor in Theology, and obtained it about the end of March, 1509, with the peculiar vocation of devoting himself to biblical theology.

“ And now, every day at one o’clock, Luther had to speak upon the Bible—precious hour alike for the Professor and the disciples, and one that enabled them to enter more and more deeply into the divine sense of those revelations, so long lost to the learned and to the common people. He began his lectures with an explanation of the Psalms, and passed on from that to the Epistle to the Romans : TO HIS MEDITATIONS ON WHICH HE WAS CHIEFLY INDEBTED for the light that broke upon his heart. In the retirement of his quiet cell, with the Epistle of St. Paul open before him, he devoted hours of study to the divine word. Having one day come to the 17th verse of the first chapter, he there read the passage of the prophet Habakkuk—‘ *The just shall live by his faith.*’ He was struck by these words. For the just, then, there is a different way of life from that of the rest of men, and this life is bestowed by faith. This word, which he received into his heart as if God had deposited it there, unveiled to him the mystery of the Christian life, and gave further growth to that life in himself. Long after, amid his many labours, he would think that he still heard a voice saying to him, ‘ *The just shall live by his faith.*’

“ Luther’s lectures, thus prepared, were unlike anything that had been heard up to that time. It was no fine-worded rhetorician or pedantic schoolman that now spoke ; it was a Christian who had experienced the power of divine truths, who drew them from the BIBLE, brought them forth again from the treasury of his own heart, and presented them all full of life to his astonished auditors. It was not man’s teaching ; it was the teaching of God.

“ This altogether novel exposition of the truth made a noise ; the noise of it spread far and wide, and attracted a crowd of young foreign students to the recently-founded University. Several even of the

* The Holy Scriptures in the original tongues.

Professors attended Luther's lectures—among others Mellerstadt, often called the *light of the world*, the first rector who, at Leipsic, where he had formerly been, had already combated the ridiculous dogmatics of scholasticism, had denied that 'the light created on the first day was theology,' and had maintained that the study of letters was the basis of that science. 'This monk,' said he, 'will put to rout all the doctors; he will introduce a new doctrine, and reform the whole Church; for he takes his post on the word of Christ, and no man can impugn or overthrow that word, even were he to attack it with all the arms of philosophy, of the sophists, the Scotists, Albertists, the Thomists, and with all the Tartarets.'

"Staupitz, who was the HAND OF PROVIDENCE to draw forth the gifts and treasures that lay hid in Luther, now invited him TO PREACH in the church of the Augustinians. But the young Professor recoiled from this proposal. He wished to confine himself to academical functions, and trembled to think of undertaking to preach also. Staupitz urged him in vain. 'No, no,' he replied; 'it is no small matter to speak to men in the place of God.' How touching is this humility in the great reformer of the Church! Staupitz insisted. But the ingenious Luther found fifteen arguments, pretexts, and pretences, to defend himself against this call. In the end, as the chief of the Augustinians continued his attack,—'Ah, Mr. Doctor,' said Luther, 'in doing this you are killing me.' 'Agreed,' said the Vicar-General; 'and be it so in God's name! for our Lord has need of devoted and able men in the upper world also.' Luther had at last to yield."

How different this from the extreme view of the Friends—that as it is the sole prerogative of Christ to call and prepare his servants, therefore they cannot take any part in "the selection, preparation, and appointment of ministers of the Gospel;" and that since "man can be no adequate judge beforehand of the capacity of his brother for such a work," it is the duty of his people to "wait patiently on their Divine Master with prayer and supplication, until he be pleased to raise up and anoint for their service those whom he has chosen." Here, again, they lose sight of the important principle that the purposes of God are worked out by the employment of means. If the

spirits of the prophets are to be "subject to the prophets" after they are called, and if the believers in general are exhorted not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God, surely the more experienced members of the Church may form some estimate beforehand of a brother's probable fitness for the work; and they may become the instruments in God's hand to encourage and draw out the diffident or reluctant subject of the call. If, as J. J. Gurney admits, the system of the Friends has a marked tendency to encourage a slothful and indifferent disposition in the minister who has received and been accustomed to attend to the call, it must be at least equally powerful in keeping back those who are called, but who have not yet had the courage to answer; and there is every reason to believe that hundreds of promising young Friends have, from this very want of encouragement such as man may properly hold out, without in the least *interfering* with the work of the Great Master, been lost to the Church and the world; and, as a necessary consequence, their own growth has been blighted, their glowing desires chilled, the lusts of other things have ENTERED IN, and they have brought NO fruit to perfection.

It was Jesus Christ who called Luther, but Staupitz was the instrument employed to press home the call. Had Luther been left to himself, and Staupitz yielded to his diffidence, the great design of God with reference to Luther would have been frustrated. It is not that God CANNOT do these things by his *immediate* influence, but that he designs, he WILLS to do it through his chosen instruments; and Staupitz was as much chosen to develope the gift in Luther, as Luther was chosen to oppose, by his preaching of the neglected Gospel, the formalisms of Rome and the dogmas of the Pope.

To return to the preaching of Luther. In the middle of Wittemburg market-place there stood an old wooden chapel, thirty feet long by twenty feet broad, with its partitions propped on all sides, and ready to fall into ruins. An old pulpit, made of boards, and three feet high, received the preacher, and in this wretched chapel began the preaching of the Reformation. God designed that what was to re-establish his glory was to have the most lowly beginnings.

Luther preached, and all were struck with the new preacher; his

hearers were captivated with his expressive face, noble air, and clear sonorous voice. Before his time, most preachers had sought rather for what might amuse their auditors, than for what might convert them. But the deep seriousness that predominated in Luther's sermons, the joy wherewith his knowledge of the Gospel had filled his heart, gave to his eloquence an authority, a fervour, and an unction, which not one of his predecessors had possessed.

And yet he preached at stated times; but who will say that he did not *wait* on his ministry, watching thereto with prayer, and meditation, and research, always having his loins girt about and his light burning, in order that *when* the time came he might be "found ready."

"Endued with a mind remarkable for promptness and vivacity," says one of his adversaries, "of a strong memory, and singularly happy in the use he made of his mother tongue, Luther yielded to none of his age in eloquence. Discoursing from the elevation of the pulpit, like a man under the influence of some strong passion, he suited his action to his words, struck the minds of his hearers in the most extraordinary manner, and hurried them like a torrent whithersoever he would. So much force, so much grace and eloquence, are seldom found among the northern nations."—"He had an eloquence," says Bossuet, "full of life and impetuosity, which drew along with it, and ravished the people."

Soon the little chapel was found too small to contain the hearers that pressed into it in crowds. Upon this, the town-council of Wittemburg chose Luther as their preacher, and invited him to preach in the town church. He made a still greater impression there. The force of his genius, the eloquence of his diction, and the excellence of the doctrines he announced, alike astonished his hearers. His fame became widely diffused, and Frederick the Wise himself, on one occasion, came to Wittemburg to hear him. Is this, then, the kind of preaching that Barclay would describe as the blowing casually upon the dry bones to raise *some* feeble breathings after God till the day dawn? Let the mighty results decide. Here were natural talents, gifts, and graces, human learning and Bible knowledge, all enlisted in the great cause. But what would all these have been,

without the preparing and accompanying work of the Holy Spirit? Did Luther depend on the aid of the Spirit, or did he not? Was he open to the charge of Barclay, that he neither expected nor waited for it? Let Luther's own words determine. Rebuking his followers for their ill-judged use of violence in putting an end to the mass, he distinctly attributes all the efficacy of his preaching to God. He regarded himself, as he truly was, simply as an instrument in God's hand. He spread the truth, but it was the Holy Spirit that gave it efficacy.

"The mass," he said, "is a bad thing; God is its enemy; it ought to be abolished; and I would that throughout the whole world it were superseded by the Supper of the Gospel. But let none tear any from it with violence. The matter ought to be committed to God. It is his word that ought to act, and not we. I would preach, I would write, but I would lay constraint upon no one, for faith is a voluntary thing. See what I have done! I rose in opposition to the Pope, the indulgences, and the papists; but I did so without tumult and violence. I pressed before all things the WORD OF GOD; I preached, I wrote; I did nothing else. And while I was asleep, or seated familiarly at table with Amsdorff and Melancthon, as we sat and conversed at our ease over our Wittenburg beer, THAT WORD THAT I HAD BEEN PREACHING subverted the Popedom in such wise, that never was it so damaged by prince or emperor. I DID NOTHING. ALL was done by the WORD. Had I wished to appeal to force, Germany might possibly have been soaked with blood. But then what would have been the result? Nothing short of ruin and desolation for soul and body. I therefore kept myself quiet, and left the word to make its course through the world. Know you what the devil thinks, when he sees people employ force in disseminating the Gospel among men? Seated with his hands crossed, behind hell fire, he says, with a malignant look and frightful leer, 'Ah! but these fools are sages indeed, thus to do my work for me!' But when he sees the WORD go forth and engage ALONE on the field of battle, he then feels ill at ease, his knees smite each other; he shudders and swoons away with fright."* Luther speaks here of the word of God, and not of

* D'Aubigné, vol. xi., p. 37.

the Spirit; but he is here contrasting it with human means, the violence that he has been condemning. That he recognized the need for the influence of the Holy Spirit in giving efficacy to the word, may be clearly implied from his writings on other occasions. His hymn to the Holy Spirit has the following:—

“Oh, kindle in each breast the flame of love,
 The fire of zeal, the light of hallowed joy;
 Thus our weak flesh thy holy aid shall prove,
 Thy strength, thy grace, which nothing can destroy.
 The finger, Thou, of God, on his right hand,
 In uncreated majesty arrayed;
 Whilst soon the Father’s word through every land,
 In every tongue, BY THEE shall be conveyed.”

To show how extreme are the views of Barclay, and how much room there is for a middle course, avoiding the evils that he condemns, and securing the advantages he appreciates, without adopting the peculiar views of the Friends as to WAITING for the promptings of the Spirit, we shall here give his description of what he terms “the ministers and ministry our adversaries plead for.”

“1. They are such as have no immediate call from Christ, to whom the motion of the Spirit is not reckoned necessary; but who are called, sent forth, and ordained by wicked men.

“2. They are such to whom the grace of God is no needful qualification; and so may be true ministers according to them, though they be ungodly, unholy, and profligate men.

“3. They are such as wait not for, nor expect, nor need the Spirit of God to actuate and move them in the work of the ministry; but what they do, they do from their own mere natural strength and ability, and what they have stolen from the letter of Scripture and other men’s books.

“4. They are such as strive and contend for superiority, and claim precedency over one another.

“5. They are such as, not having freely received, will not freely give; but are covetous, doing that which they ought not for filthy lucre’s sake. They, judging the *life*, *grace*, and *Spirit* no essential

part of their ministry, are therefore for the upholding of a human, carnal, dry, barren, fruitless, and dead ministry; of which, alas! we have seen the fruits in the most parts of their churches."

We readily admit that in the State-authorized formalism and dogmatism of the Roman and Anglican Churches, there has been, and remains to be, much to warrant the above sweeping censures. The notoriously immoral lives of the clergy in general in Barclay's time, and of too many of them at the present day, and some of the teachings of the Prayer-book, especially Articles XXII. and XXVI., together with the whole system of preferments, pluralities, compulsory support of the ministry and churches, and enormous salaries,—certainly form a striking contrast to the Gospel standard. We admit, too, that even in our Dissenting communities there is much that savours undesirably of the Judaizing tendency that so early showed itself in the Christian Church. The Friends have done a noble work in their testimony against the distinction of clergy and laity—the heresy of a human priesthood—the "sacraments" of "water baptism," and the "Supper," in which the Christian minister assumes the priestly character, and from which, as the ever prolific germ of formalism, Popery took its rise, and in which the puissant germ of popery will ever remain conserved, ready in degenerate times, as with the Tractarians, to merge into Popery, until enlightened spiritual views come to be entertained on these two important topics.

We contend, however, that there is a middle course between all this and the silently expectant system into which, as the opposite extreme, the Friends have rushed; a middle course, in which the solid advantages of a regular stated ministry may be secured, free from the evils that have been alluded to—a ministry not entered upon in man's wisdom or will, but in the fear of God, at the call of Christ, in which shall be secured all the advantages of human cultivation, and learning, and talent, sanctified by, and subordinated to, the Holy Spirit, and depending on its guidance alone for direction and power. IN THE WANT OF PROVISION FOR SUCH A MINISTRY, more than by all other circumstances combined, we believe that the weakness of the Friends consists.

CHAPTER XIII.

PAYMENT OF MINISTERS.

“Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”
1 COR. ix. 13, 14.

It cannot be denied that too many of the professed ministers of Christ are devoid of the true qualifications for their important office. Actuated by worldly motives, total strangers to the experience that led the great apostle to exclaim, “The love of Christ constraineth us,” they answer rather to the character of the wolf that entereth but to steal and to destroy, than to that of the Good Shepherd that giveth his life for the sheep.

It is equally obvious, that to such characters the distinction between clergy and laity has peculiar charms. The preaching of such men must, of necessity, be cold and formal, and it would be preposterous to expect from it the genuine fruits of the Gospel. In connexion with such ministry, salvation by forms is a necessary concomitant—the unregenerate minister being no more capable of promoting the work of vital religion in his hearers, than a man deaf from his birth would be qualified to teach music, or a blind man the art of painting. The enormous emoluments, the deference, the worldly influence connected with the priestly office in State-churches, are eminently calculated to induce men from inferior motives to undertake the “cure of souls.” The same evil is to be found in some of the Dissenting communities, though in a much more limited degree. The extent to which this influence prevails, it is not our province now to determine. Suffice it to say, that it is obvious enough to account for the strong stand that the Friends have made against a hireling ministry.

But here, again, we are compelled to inquire, whether their zeal has not urged them into the opposite extreme, in inducing them to

condemn all regular payment of ministers, and all devotion of the lives of individuals to the exclusive work of the ministry. They go so far as to admit, that while a minister is engaged amongst a given people, so as to have no time to labour for his own maintenance, the Gospel requires that they should support him. Let it, then, be supposed that, like Timothy, some one is called to give up his *whole life* to the service, then must he be entitled to maintenance for his whole life. Here we are met by the argument, that the support was to be a free-will offering, and not a stipulated sum; and that when a fixed amount is paid, it is "purchasing the gift of God." Against all compulsory payments for the support of the ministry or any of the arrangements of the Christian religion, we would here enter our strongest protest; but we confess that we cannot see how the principle at issue is involved in the payment of a moderate salary, barely sufficient, it may be, to supply the most ordinary wants of the minister, instead of leaving the sum open from year to year. This difficulty may, however, be met by the minister not stipulating for a given sum, but consenting to live upon the free-will offerings of his flock, leaving the amount to their individual generosity and conscience—a method that has been tried again and again with complete success, and which, if the qualifications and call of the individual are such as to fit him for the work, only requires faith to admit of its general adoption.

Here, as in other extremes, the system of the Friends defeats its own object. Their ministers not being required to give themselves wholly to the work, are generally engaged in some branch of trade or commerce, or in one of the professions. If, by this means, the ministers are preserved from the temptation to undertake the office from worldly motives, they are just in proportion in danger of being tempted to NEGLECT the oversight of the flock for the pursuit of gain—of allowing themselves to be so far absorbed in the affairs of business, and so leavened by the spirit of the world, as to lessen very much their *inclination* and their *opportunities* for *feeding* the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers, or for preaching the Gospel to a perishing world. The Friends see and lament the

worldly spirit that is sapping their strength and cooling their zeal; but they will not see how the system in which they take such pride engenders the very evils that it is intended to counteract or to exclude. Worldly-mindedness is a cause of spiritual dearth; but there is a cause for the cause. We put it to the candid reader, whether the paid minister with his stipend of £150 or £200 per annum, without the prospect, more or less remote, of having hundreds changed into thousands, or being raised to exalted worldly position as the occupant of some deanery or bishopric—or the Friend who has become a minister of Christ, whether he be a poor man struggling through long and toilsome business-hours for the means of subsistence, or a wealthy Friend who still remains connected with commercial affairs, mixed up, it may be, with the concerns of factories, railway directorships, or joint-stock companies—is more likely to be distracted and cooled down by intercourse with the world, or deterred by the influence of filthy lucre from the full and systematic discharge of his ministerial duties. It should here be borne in mind, that, in addition to the fearfully low moral atmosphere of the commercial world generally, to which the Friend is thus exposed, he is altogether free from that strong motive to be instant in season and out of season, which the regularly recurring duties of the other constantly present; but, on the other hand, is furnished by his system with a ready excuse—when prevented by the cold and worldly spirit from exercising his gift—that the Spirit does not move him. Supposing, however, that the individual is enabled through grace to rise superior to the worldly spirit, and to keep the things of God constantly uppermost while attending to the affairs of the world, still it is impossible that his mind can be to the same extent impressed and informed with regard to the wants of his flock, and of the perishing world around him, as would be the case if, in the faithful discharge of his pastoral duties, he occupied a considerable portion of every day in visiting the members of his flock, and those children of sorrow and affliction that abound in the world, and on whose behalf the great Master claims the attention and sympathy of every disciple, but especially that of his ambassadors.

The instructions of Paul to Titus prove that the payment of ministers was a recognized practice in the apostolic days. It has its liability to abuse; and abuse soon crept in—favoured, as it appears, by the absence of system in the appointment of ministers. “For there be many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision; whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.” The Friends quote this expression “for filthy lucre’s sake,” to show that the ministry is to be entirely unpaid; but a careful inspection of the two or three passages where it occurs, will show that it rather indicates that they were paid, and that the apostle was guarding against the abuse, of undertaking these duties FOR THE SAKE of the remuneration. The order of things was not established at once upon a complete and permanent basis; but, as emergencies arose, arrangements were made to meet them, and as abuses crept in, they were met by regulations suited to the occasion. Thus it is that we find Paul speaking of “letters of commendation” from one church to another; thus it was that the seven men were chosen to preside over the daily ministration of the temporalities of the Church; and thus it was that Paul left Titus at Crete, expressly that, says he, “thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.” Then follow the qualities to be possessed by the elected elder or bishop, where, amongst other things it is prescribed, that he should hold “fast the faithful word as he hath been TAUGHT; that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”

It was in this rational manner that Paul the apostle proposed to remedy the abuse to which allusion has been made, and to stop the unruly, the vain talkers, and the deceivers: viz., by the regular appointment of some of the older and more experienced brethren (elders) as overseers and teachers in the church—men qualified by genuine tried disinterestedness, by true Christian temper and graces, and by suitable instruction, to take such a prominent and recognized place, as teachers and rulers in the Church, as should lead the people to withdraw their confidence from the unprincipled and designing

men whom he describes, (v. 10,) with whom the love of gain was the ruling motive.

The *principles* on which the churches of Christ are to be constituted will be found in the New Testament—and the *broad outline* of the resultant *practice* is traced in the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of Paul; but the filling in, the minute details, are left to be worked out by enlightened judgment, in the Spirit of Christ, acting on the experience obtained from the various experiments that have from time to time been made.

The PRINCIPLE of paid ministers is laid down by the great Master himself, when, not satisfied with the instructions given to the Seventy for the special occasion on which he was sending them, he gives it a universal application, by saying, "For the labourer is worthy of his hire." The great Apostle to the Gentiles enunciates the same principle, bringing the law of Moses to bear typically on the question,* and concluding, "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they that preach the gospel should live by the gospel." The Friends allow the force of this argument to be neutralised by the fact, that Paul, while asserting the right, declines to make use of it, saying, "But I have used none of these things; neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void." "What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel."—1 Cor. ix. 15, *et seq.* All honour to those who, like Paul, have the pre-eminently disinterested zeal that led him thus to write to the Corinthians. But let not the system which the Lord hath ordained, be set aside or called in question, because one of his exalted servants chose to decline to use the power that the Gospel gave him.

But there was a special reason why Paul acted thus towards the Corinthians. Contention and unwarrantable partiality had divided

* 1 Cor. ix. 9 :—"For it is written, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox. Doth God take care for oxen? or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes no doubt this was written," &c.

the infant church into hostile factions. Gross immorality had crept in, and the believers had not been faithful in dealing with the offenders. So far were they from being made perfect in love, that brother went to law with brother, and that before unbelievers. In all these things they proved that they were still carnal, and required to be fed with milk, and not with meat. But to bring this painful state of things more closely home to Paul, they had disputed his very apostleship, and made it necessary for him to discharge that most painful of all duties to the generous and disinterested,—to stand up in vindication of his own apostleship and authority. “Am I not an apostle?” he enquires indignantly; “am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord?” What wonder, then, that the apostle, filled with righteous zeal and indignation, should refuse to eat of the milk of such a flock, or to partake of their carnal things? But the sequel proves, that though labouring, when he could, for his own maintenance, and refusing altogether to receive anything from the ungracious Corinthians, he *did* receive support from others, in such a way as to confirm by his own example the principle that he enunciated. In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, where, with mingled feelings, he rejoices on the one hand over the good effect which had been produced by his former letter, and regrets on the other hand the remains of that hard feeling towards himself which had before roused his indignation, he justifies the course that he has taken, (xi. 7–10): —“Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached the gospel of God freely? I robbed other churches, TAKING WAGES OF THEM to do you service. And when I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man; for *that which was lacking to me the brethren from Macedonia supplied*: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome *unto you*, and so will I keep myself. As the truth is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting *in this region of Achaia*.” Glorious example! Worthy follower of the great Master! One day showing to the Ephesian believers, how that so labouring they ought also to support the weak; at another time “robbing” the Macedonian

churches, who acknowledged his apostleship, "abasing" himself, in order that he might be in a position most effectually to rebuke the special faults of the Achaïans. But what of the argument against the payment of ministers? It has vanished; the exception has most triumphantly proved the rule.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MODEL PASTOR.

"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves it is unto God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause."—2 COR. v. 11-13.

IN order to show by a recent example the way in which a minister may be paid, and yet take the oversight of the flock, "not for filthy lucre's sake, but of a ready mind," and how he may be devoted exclusively to the work of the ministry, without lording it over God's heritage or entailing upon his charge the evils arising from the distinction between the clergy and laity,—let us take a glance at the indefatigable and self-forgetting Oberlin, who, in his remote and isolated district of the Ban de la Roche, proved most triumphantly how much God designs to do, and will do, through rightly-directed human instrumentality, and how extensively and effectually the Friends, in their cry of "Cease ye from man," have overlooked the very means by which God carries out his plans.

Oberlin had, in the first place, the requisite qualifications of heart and mind. Naturally generous, impulsive, and full of indignation against injustice, and sympathy with the oppressed and the needy, he was, in early life, the subject of Divine visitations, and at the age of twenty solemnly dedicated himself to the Lord. Confessing his sins, relying solely for justification on the merits of a crucified and risen

Saviour, renouncing all worldly pleasures and all the dominion of sin, in order that his God might be all and in all to him, he consecrated himself to the service of that God—his soul, his body, his all of earthly good—desiring, if compatible with the will of God, to be employed in the thrice blessed and exalted work of winning souls to Christ. Burning with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, he asks to be employed in the blessed work, and to be endued with courage openly to declare himself on the Lord's side. He devoted himself entirely to the work of the ministry, and pursued the prescribed course of studies.

It is not to be supposed that a man may not become a successful preacher without having pursued a course of preparatory study. Grant, with the Friends, that it is non-essential—the question still remains, whether it is desirable or not. We have already quoted a passage from J. J. Gurney, in which he acknowledges, that intellectual culture is calculated to have a highly desirable effect, even on the Gospel ministry. What, then, can be the advantage of neglecting any of those means which are so distinctly recognised as beneficial in their results. That there are many abuses connected with college education is too obvious. Where worldly-minded and ambitious young men congregate, without any proper sense of the solemn nature of the calling—which, it may be, from purely worldly motives, they purpose to adopt, regarding it merely as the road to emolument and distinction—the result may fairly be anticipated. But when a suitable course of study is undertaken in order to confer a certain limited portion of the qualification required for a career of the most extended usefulness, by individuals whose leading motive, like that of Oberlin, is a burning zeal for God's glory and the salvation of souls, then the results will be of a very different character; and where, in the men chosen to preside over and conduct such establishments, eminent piety and consistency of character are made the primary qualifications, there is every reason to expect that, in the great majority of instances, the studies pursued and the preliminary exercises undergone, as a gradual introduction to the work of the ministry, will be eminently blessed by the great Head of the Church.

It is worthy of remark, that a very large proportion of the great

revivals of vital Christianity have, in great measure, had their origin in academic halls. It was the lectures of the pious Bradwardine, of Merton College, that gave its bias to the mind of Wickliffe; and it was in connexion with a university life, that he received the truths which made him what he was. It was in similar circumstances that Luther was called to, and fitted for, the great work of the Reformation in Germany. It was in the halls of learning that the true Reformation arose in England, so erroneously ascribed to Henry VIII., but really effected by men of an entirely different stamp, and of whom he took but little cognizance, his part being chiefly to take advantage of the re-action against Popery, in order to carry his own selfish ends and obtain power and wealth at the expense of the falling Romanists. It was at Oxford, while pursuing his studies, that William Tyndale, whose indefatigable labours—together with those of Bilney, at Cambridge, and John Frith—sowed the seeds of the English Reformation. Tyndale found in the Bible a revelation long mislaid and neglected. The younger members of the university gathered round him and read the Gospels with him. The monks, as usual, took alarm. Bilney was not inactive at Cambridge. Not long had the sublime lesson of Jesus Christ filled him with joy, before he fell on his knees and exclaimed—"O! Thou who art the Truth, give me strength that I may teach it, and convert the ungodly by means of one who has been ungodly himself." After this prayer his eyes gleamed with new fire; he had assembled his friends, and, opening Erasmus's Testament, had placed his finger on the words that had reached his soul; and these had reached many."* John Fryth, a young man of eighteen, the son of an innkeeper of Sevenoaks, in Kent, was distinguished among the students of King's College by the promptitude of his understanding and the integrity of his life. In the Holy Scriptures he recognized a learning of a new kind. "Mere study," he said, "is sufficient to impress the theories of mathematics on our minds; but this science of God meets with a resistance in man that *necessitates the intervention of a divine power*. Christianity is a regeneration."

These three young scholars set to work with enthusiasm. They

* D'Aubigné.

declared that neither priestly absolution nor any other religious rite could give remission of sins ; that the assurance of pardon is obtained by faith alone, and that faith purifies the heart. They then addressed to all men this saying of Christ's, at which the monks were so much offended, and which is now so offensive to all formalists :—" *Repent and be converted!* " Ideas so new produced a great clamour. They were declaimed—persecution followed—but the light had broken, and it has never since been obscured as it had previously been. The words of Bilney are being fulfilled—when, after praying for the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, and calling upon God to come to the assistance of his Church, he exclaimed :—" A new time is beginning : the Christian assembly is about to be renewed ; some one is coming unto us. I see him, I hear him, it is Jesus Christ—He is the King, and it is He who will call the true ministers commissioned to evangelise the people." Thus the English Reformation began, independently of Luther and Zwingli—deriving its origin from God alone. "The principle of the Reformation at Oxford, Cambridge, and London was the new Greek Testament published by Erasmus."

The men in whom the fire was first kindled, were young college students. The influence on which they relied for the efficiency of their labours, was the Holy Spirit, which Barclay declares they neither waited for nor expected. The means they employed was the preaching of the Gospel in a manner and under circumstances that Barclay in his eighth proposition condemns as "superstition, will-worship, and abominable idolatry." The results have been, and remain to be, such as to prove that God's signal blessing rested upon the whole ; and had it not been for the too general leaven of Popery and worldly-mindedness infusing itself into the glorious movement, and marring the work, the truths then so distinctly perceived and nobly proclaimed by this band of enlightened men, might, ere now, have been universally acknowledged.

2. THE CHARACTER of Oberlin was such as to fit him for his arduous and solemn responsibilities. "His manner was grave, but affectionate ; condescending, but in the highest degree gentlemanly. His courtesy towards his parishioners was constantly testified. He

did not pass those amongst them who were grown up, without pulling off his hat, and speaking a few words of kindness, nor any of the children without shaking them by the hand, or showing them some little act of attention." His servants were treated in every respect as members of his own family—taking their meals at the same table, and serving him with the most fervent and disinterested devotedness. He entered with the utmost delicacy into all the feelings of his parishioners, and would not have the feelings of the humblest or the roughest injured, without endeavouring to repair the mischief. This is the kind of influence to disarm ruffianism and coward brutality. If the desperate class were uniformly treated in such a spirit in this country, it would do more to reclaim the outcasts and suppress violent crimes, than all the prisons, penitentiaries, and reformatories in our land. Such an influence the Friends, however much disposed, do not allow themselves the opportunity to exert, except in the capacity of private individuals. How much its influence must be enhanced, when found in connexion with the duties and office of the Christian minister, will be seen at once.

3. Oberlin's habits were very orderly. He was thoroughly systematic in his studies, and, in short, in everything that he did. In his conversation he was fluent and very unreserved, willing to communicate all he knew, and seizing every opportunity for acquiring information. His activity was as astonishing as his zeal. He would climb the steepest summits of the Vosges, or penetrate through the pathless snows, regardless of cold or danger, in order to visit the sick or administer religious consolation to the dying. Often, too, after all the varied and arduous duties of the day, would he travel to Strasburg in the night, to procure medicine or to obtain assistance or information from his friends in the city, that not a day might be lost to the interests of his beloved Steinthal.

The superiority of his intellectual powers appeared in all he said, and in all he did; and he possessed a great influence over others, everybody loving and obeying him absolutely, though without servility—beautifully exemplifying the meaning of Christ when he said to his ambitious disciples, "Whosoever will be great among you, let

him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Matt. xx. 26.

4. Oberlin was distinguished by his devotion as a minister, and his earnestness in seeking the salvation of his parishioners. Fruits are made by the great Master the test of faith and graces; and there is no fruit more satisfactory as an evidence of capacity and of faithfulness, than successful effort to bring sinners to Christ. It is not necessary for the cultivation of this grace, that everyone should be a minister. Every living member of the Church of Christ is a preacher of salvation, and will find his duty, his pleasure, and one chief means of growing in grace and true holiness, in labouring, according to his opportunity, for this exalted object. If such be the duty of every believer, it is emphatically that of the minister. Oberlin proved himself in this particular a workman that needed not to be ashamed, and though a paid minister, who, according to J. J. Gurney, had sold the gift of the Spirit, he vindicated himself most thoroughly from the charge of being a mere hireling, by his untiring zeal and self-sacrificing labours for the welfare of his charge.

Having once settled amongst them, as he believed, under the direction of the great Master, he was unwilling to change on any account. A much better living being offered him, "No," said he, "I have been ten years learning every head in my parish, and obtaining an inventory of their moral, intellectual, and domestic wants; I have laid my plan: I must have ten years to carry it into execution, and the ten following years to correct their faults and vices." Such extreme devotedness to the interests of his flock, combined with his peculiarly endearing and affectionate manner, necessarily caused Oberlin to be revered and loved as a father. Every lip became eloquent in his praise—every voice pronounced his name with grateful benedictions—and the stranger who visited the pine covered hills and verdant dales of the once forsaken Ban de la Roche, found there, instead of a set of rude, ignorant savages, an industrious, decent, orderly, and well-informed peasantry, many of whom had been so far

initiated into both the doctrine and the spirit of the New Testament, as to live in the exercise of that love which is said to be "the fulfilling of the law," and in connexion with which, the apostle says, "He who loveth God must love his brother also." His great concern was, that all should be true Christians—in heart, and not merely in form. His preaching was earnest, affectionate, solemn. He was accustomed to preach very alarmingly on the judgment to come, and the punishment of the wicked; though, at the same time, he held out the fatherly love of God to every returning sinner, who would seek Him through Jesus Christ.

His sermons were almost always composed with the greatest care; and when unable, for want of time, to write them out at length, he at least made a tolerably full outline. In general he committed them scrupulously to memory; but in the pulpit he did not confine himself to the precise words, and would, indeed, sometimes change the subject altogether, if he saw that another was apparently better suited to the circumstances of his auditory. The character of the man, the results of his ministry, the testimony of those who knew him to the truly spiritual character of his labours, all combine to rebuke that wholesale condemnation of paid ministry and stated services which results from the views of the Friends on this subject. The following extract from a letter from Dr. Steinkopff might have been perused with advantage and instruction by Robert Barclay and his followers. "I cannot describe the veneration I felt on approaching Mr. Oberlin, that servant of God and benefactor of man, who, in his eightieth year, is still full of health, vigour, and activity, and gladly spends his remaining strength in doing good. Serenity and cheerfulness are depicted in his countenance; and he delights in communicating to his Christian friends something of that peace of God which possesses his own soul." One of the favourite passages of the Friends against a paid ministry is, "freely ye have received, freely give." But there is a higher sense in which it may be taken—and in which perhaps no man more fully than Oberlin carried out the injunction—while the Friends, with their literal view of the subject, have so limited their own supplies, and hedged themselves round with artificial hindrances,

that they seem to have little left to give—and to give what they have with a very sparing hand.

5. But there was another feature of Oberlin's character to which we wish to draw attention, because it shows the advantage that may result from the plan of some persons being set apart for the work of the ministry, in accordance with the exhortation of Paul to Timothy,—"Thou, O man of God, give thyself wholly to these things." The immense abuse of the system by the men who take charge of the flock only for the sake of the fleece, and who live in lordly grandeur and luxury among their parishioners, without any bond of mutual interest or affection, is no sufficient argument against the system itself. It is not the connexion of the Church with the State that we are contending for, nor yet the compulsory rates for the payment of ministers. With the Friends we believe that these arrangements are essentially at variance with the spirit of Christianity, and necessarily injurious in their influence, though admitting of exceptional cases. What we wish to show is, the vast amount of good that may result both to the souls and the bodies of the people of any locality, from their having a man like Oberlin amongst them, a man really concerned for their welfare, not too proud to make himself one of them, not living in a distinct social atmosphere of his own, with a round of fashionable acquaintances, who look down upon mankind in general with haughty indifference, or with an affected condescension still more repulsive; but one who, like Oberlin, actuated by the self-sacrificing, self-forgetting spirit of his great Master, lives for his people—lives to do them good.

The world has yet to learn, from the devoted Oberlin, a most important lesson. We have already just hinted at his zeal for the temporal welfare of his charge. In this respect he was truly exemplary, and the change which his sole labours effected in that remote and wild district have been the wonder of all. Whatever affected the comfort and welfare of his people was *his* business. He urged them to make roads, and he led the way. With his pickaxe on his shoulder he went out, to share and to direct their labours. He saw what advantage fruit-trees would be in the neighbourhood. He

himself planted and grafted; he excited the emulation of the people, and the whole district adopted the suggestion, and reaped the benefit. He found the potato deteriorated, the quality and the yield being fearfully reduced. He pointed out the cause, obtained fresh seed from distant localities, and rendered the labours of his people many times more profitable; and, eventually, the locality became famous for the abundance and superiority of this crop. He encouraged economy in articles capable of being turned into manure, paying the children for tearing up old rags, also the collecting of leaves of trees, stalks of rushes, &c., &c. He introduced flax, which answered well, and considerably augmented the resources of the inhabitants. He encouraged the people to convert their least productive pastures into arable land, and to adopt the plan of feeding their cattle in stalls, always recommending his innovations by first trying them for himself; success disarmed prejudice, and his efforts prospered beyond his most sanguine expectations. He actually formed an agricultural society, and delivered a weekly lecture on scientific subjects, connected with the employment of the people. "Not a year rolled away in which some astonishing improvement was not effected in the condition or morals of his people; and the surrounding districts beheld with admiration the rapid progress that civilization was continually making in the once neglected and apparently forsaken Steinthal. Let the Friends, if they will, cry out in view of such wonders wrought out, under God's blessing, by the energy and self-sacrifice of one man, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of;" and let the indolent and selfish State-Churchman, or the designing promoter of centralization, and political influence secured by State Churches and State education, cry out that voluntaryism is a failure. We would rather exclaim,— "What hath God wrought!"—not without means, nor by those who wait for a fresh impulse every time before they obey God's plain commands, or exercise the gifts that He has committed to their keeping; not by those who are such utter strangers to the burning, self-forgetting love to God and man which true vital Christianity engenders,—that they seek to supplement their lack of faith by the aid of legislation;—but BY MEANS OF ONE single-hearted, earnest,

self-denying, loving, Christ-like man, who, though receiving a stated sum for his services, still was NO HIRELING, and of whom most emphatically it can be said, that he took the oversight of the flock, not for filthy lucre's sake, but of a ready mind,—going to the full extent of his means—setting an example of the strictest frugality, in order that he might have the more “freely to give,” and performing labours without fee or reward, which, if estimated by a commercial standard, would have been worth many a thousand times more than all that he received.

The labours of Oberlin were acknowledged by M. le Comte François de Neuchâteau, in an address to the Royal and Central Agricultural Society of Paris, in 1818, in the following glowing, but not exaggerated, language, when proposing the vote of a gold medal to the worthy pastor, in commemoration of the services which he had rendered during more than half a century to the cause of agriculture and of humanity:—“If you would behold an instance of what may be effected in any country for the advancement of agriculture and the interests of humanity, quit, for a moment, the banks of the Seine, and ascend one of the steepest summits of the Vosges mountains. Friends of the plough and of human happiness, come and behold the Ban de la Roche. Climb with me the rocks so sublimely piled upon each other, which separate this canton from the rest of the world; and though the country and the climate may at first sight appear forbidding, I will venture to promise you an ample recompense for the fatigue of your excursion.” After stating that at the age of seventy-eight he was still carrying on the interesting reformation first suggested by his piety and zeal, and that he had by his extraordinary efforts and exertions averted from his parishioners in the years 1812, 1816, and 1817, the horrors of approaching famine, he goes on:—“Such a benefactor of mankind deserves the veneration and the gratitude of all good men; and it gives me peculiar pleasure to present you with the opportunity of acknowledging, in the person of Mr. Oberlin, not a single act, but a whole life devoted to agricultural improvements, and to the diffusion of useful knowledge amongst the inhabitants of a wild and uncultivated district. We have ascer-

tained that there is in France uncultivated land sufficient for the formation of five thousand villages. When we wish to organise these colonies, Waldbach will present a perfect model; and in the thirty or forty rural hamlets which already exist, there is not one, even amongst the most flourishing, in which social economy is carried to a higher degree of perfection, or in which the annals of the Ban de la Roche may not be studied with advantage."

Without derogating from the high merit due to this truly great man, we maintain that he was nothing more than a Christian pastor ought to be. We do not suppose that every pastor could be an Oberlin, if he were disposed to be so; but we do maintain that, with suitable modifications according to the differing circumstances of different localities, the spreading over the world of a network of Christian Churches, with an efficient staff of ministers regulated and actuated by the spirit of Oberlin, trained and educated to the duties of their high calling, and taking what he achieved as their model, might reasonably be expected to do for the whole world what Oberlin did for the Ban de la Roche. Similar results have attended the labours of our missionaries in various parts of the world; and we could point to a remote and unfrequented locality in one of the wildest parts of our own loved isle, where, to a very great extent, a similar result has followed the self-forgetting labours of an humble minister of Christ. There are doubtless many more; but why, we ask, are they the exception and not the rule? Such ministers are emphatically the want of the age. There is no existing organization whose church government, social policy, and spirit of true Christian philanthropy so pre-eminently qualify them for the work as the Society of Friends. But all these grand results have been brought about by means of a stated ministry regularly paid; and it is obvious, from the very nature of the case, that men cannot exert such an influence as Oberlin did, unless they are placed in a similar position. It requires not only leisure, but zeal, and a definite call to the work. A man may have the disposition, and far more ample means at command than Oberlin had, and still he shall not be able to secure that kind of influence which arose out of his office of pastor, carried out as it was, in the spirit of love and ardent zeal for the true welfare of the people.

Let the priestly character of the Christian minister be entirely done away by the absence of the "sacraments," and the possibility of his lording it over God's heritage reduced to a minimum by destroying the distinction between clergy and laity—giving the minister no power in the church government except as an individual member, but, as with the Friends, having all the power to rest with the members in their collective capacity—and let a previous course of instruction and training *prepare* the young men whom Christ has first *called* to the work, and the result would be a much nearer approximation to the true Gospel standard than the world has yet seen, except in individual and exceptional cases, with a correspondingly increased and ever increasing harvest of immortal spirits, to the glory of the Great Husbandman and the eternal salvation of millions who now with too much justice may exclaim, "No man careth for my soul."

With such a ministry, supported entirely by voluntary contribution, what might the Friends not have effected, and what might they not yet effect! Theirs is a system whose pre-eminently simple and scriptural doctrines are combined, to an extent elsewhere unparalleled, with the exalted self-denying, self-sacrificing morality of the New Testament—both in reference to their own members and to their dealings with the world at large. The extent to which they have influenced the community is sufficient proof of this—though for a long period doing very little to make any direct advances upon the ignorance and superstition that abound in the world. Their truthfulness, depending on the simple yea and nay—their refusal to swear, though often at the cost of property, or even of life—their early and consistent advocacy of the cause of the slave—their consistent testimony against war—their refusal to share in its spoils, or participate in its supposed protection—their strict justice in the discharge of their debts, even though released by assignment or otherwise from legal obligation,—all these eminently Christian points of morality, totally ignored as they are by a large proportion of the Christian world, have earned for them a position in public estimation, of which, had it been supported by the diligent inculcation of their doctrines, it is impossible to conceive the influence.

It is, then, with profound and solemn regret, that the sincere well-wisher of his race, and the believer in the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is compelled to acknowledge that as the Friends have now ceased, for the most part, to preach and to teach their own great principles, so has the standard of morality and Christian faithfulness degenerated amongst their own members. An indifference to the salvation of the world, and a suspension of vigorous efforts for this end, has brought leanness into their own souls; and the worldliness and keenness in the pursuit of wealth, and the repose in external things so complained of by their own living members, must, we believe, be traced, in a great measure, to this source. We find that very few of the members are acquainted, except in a very superficial manner, with their own principles — having little or no instruction, and few or no duties devolving upon them of a directly religious character. Being taught from the first, to wait in expectation of some extraordinary impulse to speak and labour in the Lord's vineyard, instead of being *encouraged* to act upon the measure of impulse already felt — good impressions fade and warm desires are extinguished, and they either become addicted to vice, or to commerce, or to worldly pursuits, and seldom rise beyond the condition of steady-going moralists—having, it may be, the form of godliness, but, alas! too little of the power; priding themselves, it may be, on their plainness of speech, as shown in addressing titled gentlemen as plain George or William, at the same time that they have not the courage to speak a word to a perishing sinner in the name of Christ, or to break off some habit of self-indulgence which, if pressed home, they are still compelled to confess to be wrong. There are many noble exceptions, we are well aware—some of the most exalted and thorough Christian characters in the land amongst the number; but we are dealing with things as they are, and we are sure that those who know the true state of the case will admit that the above description, after a fair exception has been allowed for, is substantially correct; nor, we believe, will it be possible to find a satisfactory explanation of this anomalous state of affairs, other than the one that we have given.

CHAPTER XV.

TEACHING AND PREACHING.

“Religion has never, in any period, sustained itself except by the instrumentality of the tongue of fire. Only where some men, more or less imbued with this primitive power, have spoken the words of the Lord, not with ‘the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,’ have sinners been converted, and saints prompted to a saintlier life.”—ARTHUR’S “TONGUE OF FIRE.”

THE analogy which the Friends suppose to exist between their preaching and praying, and the utterances of the prophets whose inspired writings form so important a portion of the Holy Scriptures, is, we think, without any proper foundation. To preach and pray acceptably, the Holy Spirit’s aid is undoubtedly required—but not, we believe, in a way to supersede, to the extent that they assert, the co-operation of the intellectual faculties of man. The words prophesy and preach both mean to proclaim; and while we would not for a moment limit the degree in which the Holy Spirit *may* inspire individuals now, there is, we think, no warrant for depending so exclusively as the Friends do, on those more immediate and extraordinary impulses, resulting in oracular utterances which may more properly be designated prophesy, to the exclusion of that declaration of Gospel truth which, to a certain extent they acknowledge; though, from their peculiar views on the subject, they neglect to avail themselves of it. J. J. Gurney, after giving his views of the Christian ministry, says, “There appears to exist a material distinction between teaching and preaching. While in the performance of either of these Christian duties, the dependence of the true Christian will be placed on the grace and Spirit of God, it may be freely admitted that, in *teaching*, a much greater liberty is given, for the use of our merely human faculties, than in the higher and more important office of prophecy or preaching. The Spirit operates through a variety of administrations; and opportunities frequently occur, when commenting on the Scrip-

tures,* or when the use of other means of Christian instruction is not only allowable but desirable.”

How mild ! Means of Christian instruction allowable ! and desirable ! There is a faintness in this recognition of Christian instruction that well corresponds with the position assigned to the Scripture by the Friends. What becomes of all the exhortations to diligence ? to being instant in season and out of season ? If the thing is desirable, why trust to opportunities that *may* occur—and not rather systematically make opportunities, and institute a regular provision for the religious instruction of the members and the world, to which we are so imperatively enjoined ? Paul directs Timothy, “The things that thou hast heard of me before many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, that they may be able to teach others also.” Here is an evident appointment of men, and provision for a succession of them ; and if the *men* are appointed, they will doubtless have *times* and *places* appointed for them. In this one direction we have the germ of a regular system of religious instruction and training, such, in the main, as others have adopted, but which the Friends, for fear of interfering with the headship of Christ and the work of the Spirit, decline to adopt, and for want of which, their system must sooner or later die out, unless the defect be promptly and efficiently remedied.

But the distinction which J. J. Gurney draws between teaching and preaching, is too finely drawn to stand the test of examination, or to form the basis of such an arrangement as that of the Friends. Many of the Friends admit the want of *teaching*, but their ideas as to what it consists in are extremely vague. They confound prophecy with preaching, and *practically* ignore teaching altogether. The results of teaching and preaching are the same—the spreading of the knowledge of salvation through Christ, and of the duties of Christians—and the edification of the Church. As J. J. Gurney himself maintains, the teaching requires to be done in dependence on the “grace and Spirit of God.” Who, then, shall say where the line is to be drawn ? If the sincere and humble-minded Christian *teacher* ascends

* Such opportunities are extremely rare amongst the Friends—but why not make them a regular part of the system ?

the pulpit or the platform, and in dependence on "the grace and Spirit of God" reads a portion of Scripture, and then proceeds to explain it, who shall say *to what extent* he shall be aided by the Spirit? or that, on such occasions, his teaching shall not assume the prophetic character, in the highest sense for which the Friends contend? That such is the case, in the experience of the churches who have teachers appointed—to give them no higher name—is well known to those who, with unprejudiced minds, have had the opportunity to judge for themselves. Nay more, it is the uniform experience, when the minister is a man of the right stamp—full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, as many of them are, and all ought to be and might be, so far as the system is concerned. The proof is in the result—a spirit of devotion pervades the assembly, mourners are comforted, the weak find their strength renewed, sinners are awakened, and the name of God is glorified—all that can possibly result from the best Friends' meeting is experienced on these occasions. The Holy Ghost, the Guide, the Comforter, the Great Teacher, suits a blessing to every heart, and the rightly exercised members enjoy fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and with each other, as fully as the Friends can do in their most lively meetings.

The system of the Friends does not always secure the same amount of Divine influence, and sometimes the utterances in their meetings are almost, if not altogether, devoid of unction—as their own members often remark; so that while they lose the advantage of the teaching, they do not more effectually secure the attainment of their own high standard. J. J. Gurney, having made the concession we have referred to above, on the subject of teaching, as if afraid that he had gone too far, immediately adds that "such an allowance by no means affects the principles of the Friends; that with occasions so solemn as the congregational worship of the Deity, no ministry can be in true harmony but such as proceeds from the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. It is then in a peculiar manner that the Almighty Saviour of men is present with his people. The sacred canopy of their Heavenly Father's love is spread over them; nor can they worship Him aright, unless the reasonings and imaginations of their own minds

are brought into subjection.” Are we to infer, then, that the *teaching* which, as he has already admitted, can only be rendered effective by the grace and Spirit of God—is the result of the reasonings and imaginations of the teacher’s own mind?—that there is no other exercise of man’s intellect and understanding except *his own* reasonings and imaginings?—or that there is no alternative between the spontaneous utterances of the prophet, and outward silence in the meetings for the worship of God? “At such times,” he goes on, “the mandate is proclaimed to the spiritual worshipper, ‘Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.’ If incense is then to be offered to Him, it must arise from no strange fire. If the ark of the covenant is to be uplifted among the people, none may touch it to whom the command is not given. If the pure temple of the Lord is to be built up, He must himself prepare the materials, and ‘neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron’—nothing of the *unauthorised* instrumentality of men—must be heard in the house.” * Had we not known whence this quotation comes, one might be at a loss to guess whether it was one of the house of Aaron, or a vindicator of apostolic succession, that was writing. How extremes meet again. If every believer is to “live in the Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit,” and to be a “temple of the living God,” always bound to “watch and pray,” and to live continually with his loins girt about and his light burning,—if the Spirit has been poured out on all flesh, as the Friends above all others contend, and the time come when all may know the Lord,—surely there can be no need for such a distinction as this. No believer who fulfils these conditions could offer strange fire, any more than an honest man can practice fraud, or a truly loving Christ-like man commit murder. Such limitations do away altogether with the “coming boldly to the throne of grace,” the “breaking down of the middle wall of partition,” and in effect create a distinction—more subtle it is true—but precisely similar in its operation,—to the distinction of clergy and laity which the Friends so heartily repudiate; and the effect is, that the Friends IN GENERAL no more think of opening their mouths for the simple utterance of Gospel truth, or the expres-

* “Observations.”

sion of praise, than a layman in the Church of England would think of donning the surplice some Sabbath morning, and taking the place of the consecrated priest.

UNAUTHORISED instrumentality would, doubtless, be out of place. But what is unauthorised instrumentality? Not, surely, that teaching which depends upon "the grace and Spirit of God!" We confess our inability to discover the line. It appears to be a distinction where there is no difference; and it is clear that the teaching of a sincere, earnest man of God—especially with the aids of previous study, and preparation, and prayer, though made at stated times—are just as likely to be profitable, and to fulfil the conditions of true Gospel ministry, as the occasional and unpremeditated effusions of the Friends; nor can we see anything in this kind of arrangement to prevent the teaching of the Spirit from being as immediate, and as direct, in any proper sense of the terms,—as that which the Friends seek to secure by their method. But a reference to the passage quoted, as it stands in the sacred writings, will show that there is absolutely nothing to warrant its application to the subject in hand—that its introduction here is, in short, purely arbitrary. Only three verses before there is an exhortation to SING, which might just as properly be taken out of the connexion in which it is found, and brought forward as a command or instruction to Christian congregations in their assemblies for worship.—Zech. ii. 10–13.—"SING and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come—and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, —and shall be my people: And I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion—in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord; —for he is raised up out of his holy habitation."

The prophet was foretelling the restoration of the Jews to their own land—the injunction to all flesh to be silent was a warning to the Gentiles who had executed his wrath on the Jews in their exile, to desist from further oppression, because the set time for their deliverance was come. Supposing that the passage will bear a figurative

application, still it would just as much apply to the condition of mind suitable for the Christian on all occasions and under all circumstances, as it would to meetings for worship. The flesh, in the New Testament, represents all those carnal tempers—wrath, anger, pride, malice, self-sufficiency, lust—which are hostile to the Spirit of God ; and the Friends ought to know, if any one should, that the silence of all these is as compatible with the exercise of the living voice in preaching or prayer, and even with the exercise of the duties of daily life, as it is with outward silence.

But the arrangement of ordinary congregational worship—where one man conducts the service, prays, preaches, reads the Bible, gives out the hymns—does not necessarily preclude the provision of other opportunities, when the members can all prophesy, according to the method of early days.

There is every reason to believe, as we have already observed, that these were meetings of believers, and not the occasions for preaching the Gospel to mixed assemblies, or to the world. And some of the Christian churches have such meetings at the present day.

The Wesleyan love-feast and band meeting are occasions of this description—very similar to the Friends' meeting, except that they begin with singing and prayer, instead of silent waiting, and are conducted by a minister or a brother of experience. Here the speaking is spontaneous, and it very much resembles in character the speaking of the Friends, except that there is generally more of praise and thanksgiving, and expression of individual experience of God's goodness, and less of exhortation or doctrine. Another characteristic difference, however, is worthy of notice. It is, that in the Wesleyan love-feast, so far from there being long intervals of silence, the whole time is taken up with lively utterances, and thus a near approach is made to the attainment of the object proposed by the apostle when he says, "that all may speak, and all be edified ;" whereas with the Friends—whose application of this principle to all their meetings for worship has shut them out from the benefits of a stated ministry, and the world from the knowledge of their admirable views—the speaking is almost invariably confined to the same two or three individuals, and

the sound of a new voice in the course of a long series of years, is regarded as something quite extraordinary. We have no hesitation in affirming that a good love-feast will bear comparison with the best meetings of the Friends—for the degree of unction present, sensible spiritual communion of all present, and truly spiritual and Christian character of the utterances as a whole; while, on the most ordinary of such occasions, there is a degree of spiritual life and warmth that far surpasses the cold and lifeless formality of silent meetings as they exist now, whatever they may have been in the days of Fox and Barclay.

When the theory of silent meetings was propounded, there was such an exuberance of life and zeal in the Society, that there was no danger of their being long silent; and the true tendency of the system was not felt, until it had become so far recognised, that its abandonment would have been like an abandonment of first principles—calling in question the judgment or divine guidance of the founders. It has now become the birthright of a community who, by training from their earliest childhood, and by sedulous exclusion from any opportunities of fair comparison with other systems, have contracted a habitual prejudice in favour of the system, more invincible, if possible, than conviction. There is, it is true, a shaking in certain directions; but whether the spirit of innovation will ever be allowed a sufficient footing to effect any adequate change, time alone can determine. Should this be done, there is, we believe, nothing to prevent the Society from springing again into its pristine freshness and vigour—having judges as at the first, and counsellors as at the beginning; and instead of their being content to see some signs of a collateral influence exerted on other communities, take the lead once more in the great and godlike work of the world's evangelization—presenting to the world a purer and more thorough-going exposition of Christian precept, faith and practice, on a wiser and more permanent basis, than any that has hitherto been witnessed in any section of the universal Church.

But as the *identity* that the Friends maintain to exist between preaching and prophesying does not appear to be borne out by Scripture, so the *difference* between teaching and preaching is not so

great as they attempt to show. There is, indeed, nothing to warrant their conclusion that preaching requires a higher kind of inspiration. The same individuals in apostolic days exercised both gifts; and while there is nothing in Scripture to indicate that the one requires more inspiration than the other, or of a different kind, it would appear that teaching required other qualifications of knowledge and experience, in addition to that which is required for preaching. The examples of Christ and of John the Baptist throw light upon the subject. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."—Matt. iii. 1. In process of time John was cast into prison, and "from that time JESUS BEGAN TO PREACH and say, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."—Matt. iv. 17. Then (verse 23) He "went about all Galilee TEACHING in their synagogues, and PREACHING the Gospel of the kingdom." We have seen the nature of the preaching; it was calling to repentance, and announcing the glad tidings of his approaching kingdom. This was addressed to the multitudes—to all, indiscriminately; all were called on to repent, and for the same reason,—that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. But He TAUGHT in the synagogue (iv. 23.) Who would undertake to say, that when preaching "Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," the great Master spoke with a higher authority, or a more immediate inspiration, than when he *taught* those marvellous lessons of wisdom contained in the sermon on the mount? These were for his disciples—not addressed to them in secret, but for the especial benefit of those that had ears to hear. "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his *disciples* came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and TAUGHT them." And what were his teachings? Why, things diametrically opposed to the spirit and the maxims of the world—so utterly repugnant to the carnal man, that he "seeth them not, neither knoweth them." Blessings on meekness, and poverty, and hunger, and thirst! on the peacemaker, whom the world still curses—on the victim of priestly rage, and legalised oppression and cruelty perpetrated in the sacred name of Religion, and under the impression that it was doing God service! Or those

authoritative teachings ushered in by the portentous announcement, "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time,—BUT I SAY unto you"—claiming for these teachings an authority greater than that of all the teachers—prophets included—that had gone before. The inspiration was the same: it was that described Isaiah lxi. 1:—"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives," &c.; and appropriated by Christ, Luke iv. 21, when He said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears, And "all bare Him witness and wondered at the *gracious words* that proceeded out of his mouth." The preaching was for the unawakened multitude—the teaching for the disciples, who, having obeyed the call, placed themselves as learners at the feet of Jesus, that He might teach them the things relating to himself and that heavenly kingdom that He came to establish,—that divine life which it was his mission to bring to light through the Gospel.

The apostles had an authority given them as apostles; they enunciated doctrines and laid down rules, developing the broad fundamental teachings of Christ. Men like Timothy and Titus received these teachings from the apostles, and in their turn committed them to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also. Thus a system of oral instruction, with more or less of divine inspiration, but always some, was provided. The Scriptures, in process of time, were completed; and they now present to the diligent and sincere seeker, a test of the genuineness of oral teaching, which is essential to guard against abuses in the substitution of the traditions of men for the commandments of God. This was the great crime of the Jewish teachers in the time of Christ—this is the stronghold of the Papacy, and of every false and degenerate church. But the absence of teaching is not the remedy. The only antidote is the faithful preaching and teaching of Gospel truth, combined with the extensive diffusion of the Scriptures, affording to the taught the opportunity, like the Bereans of old, of testing by the Spirit's light on the written word, the utterances of the living teacher. The systematic and well regu-

lated ministry of the word, with the free circulation of the Scriptures, and the encouragement of the exercise of private judgment, are, then, under God, the bulwark of the Church, and the grand instrumentality in God's hand for the conversion of the world.

In his observations on the ministry of women, (p. 273) J. J. Gurney gives his idea of the teaching of early days. He says that it differed from the prophetic gift in three particulars:—1, That “it was dictated rather by the general impressions of Christian love and duty, than by immediate inspiration;” 2, That it “was not employed as the ministry of the word in the assemblies for worship;” and 3, That it involved the assumption of personal authority.* To the first of these points we reply that the terms *immediate* and *general* are here used in a sense which infuses an element of instability into the whole argument—and we feel assured, from extensive observation and considerable experience, that the impressions under which the Friend rises to speak, are of a much more general character than those of the devoted preacher who has studied and prayerfully prepared his subject; while, in any legitimate sense, the teachings of the Spirit, if experienced at all, must be *immediate*, and may just as much accompany the discourse entered upon at a stated time, as that commenced under the impulse, whether divine or not, of the moment. The second particular we have anticipated, by showing that the assemblies in which those impulsive utterances are described, were assemblies of believers—and not for the preaching of the word. The third decidedly favours our position, by showing that there were persons who were authorised to hold forth the word of life; and to their duties commencing at a given time, the Friends themselves make no objection. But is it not strange, that while so distinctly recognising such a gift in their writings, they have made no provision for its exercise? Allowing all that they demand with regard to meetings for worship, why, we would ask, have they not their meetings for teaching, when these authorised persons, acting under these “general impressions of Christian love and duty” might do their part in keeping up the knowledge, at least, of the truth? Alas! no, it is distinction without

* “Observations,” p. 273.

a difference—but whichever way we take it, there is clearly indicated a want of religious teaching, such as the Scriptures clearly recognize—and the omission to provide for which will at once be seen to account for the anomalous state of things which forms the subject of the present enquiry.

If the results of the ordinary mode of conducting religious services be advanced as a proof of their being in accordance with the mind of the Spirit, it is immediately objected by the Friends, that a great deal of this influence arises from excitement, and that it is, consequently, of a transitory character; the subjects of it often returning to the world, or exhibiting only a very low standard of Christian principle in their lives and characters. We have referred to this subject elsewhere. We refer to it here, to show how inconsistent it is, if not with modern Quakerism, certainly with that of two hundred years ago. In the days of their evangelising efforts, they exulted in similar scenes, and brought them forward as a triumphant proof of the efficacy of their own system. Thus Barclay * describes the effect of the united travail of the believers in their meetings for worship:—“And if, from this inward travail, while the darkness seeks to obscure the light, and the light breaks through the darkness, which it always will do if the soul give not its strength to the darkness, there will be such a painful travail found in the soul, that will even work upon the outward man, so that oftentimes, through the workings thereof, the body will be greatly shaken, and many groans, and sighs, and tears, even as the pangs of a woman in travail, will lay hold upon it; yea, and this is not only as to one, but when the enemy, who, when the children of God assemble, is not wanting to be present, to see if he can let their comfort, hath prevailed in any measure in a whole meeting, and strongly worketh against it by spreading and propagating his dark power, and by drawing out the minds of such as are met, from the life in them;—as they become sensible of this power of his that works against them, and wrestle with it by the armour of light,—sometimes the power of God will break forth into a whole meeting, and there will be such an inward travail while each is seeking to over-

* “Apology.” p. 339.

come the evil in themselves, that by the strong contrary workings of these opposite powers, like the goings of two contrary tides, every individual will be strongly exercised as in a day of battle, and thereby a trembling and a motion of body will be upon most, if not upon all, which, as the power of truth prevails, will, from PANGS and GROANS, end with a SWEET SOUND of THANKSGIVING and PRAISE. And from this the name of Quakers, *i. e.* tremblers, was first reproachfully cast upon us: which, though it be none of our choosing, yet in this respect we are not ashamed of it, but have rather reason to rejoice, therefore, even that we are sensible of this power that hath oftentimes laid hold of our adversaries, and made them yield unto us, and join us, and confess the truth, before they had any distinct or discursive knowledge of our doctrines, so that sometimes many at one meeting have been thus convinced: and this power would sometimes also reach to and wonderfully work even in little children, to the admiration and astonishment of many." If such be the legitimate results of silent meetings, it must be admitted that there is a strange degeneracy at the present day. Where are such things ever witnessed now? How startled the order-loving Quakers would be, if something of the kind were to take place in one of their meetings some fine Sabbath morning! Perhaps nothing will more clearly show the change from life to formalism amongst them, than the way in which they regard this kind of influence. If they hear of such an influence being exerted at other places of worship, the most carnally-minded man of the world could not be more sceptical as to the genuineness of the work than the modern Quaker. The air of startled curiosity with which they hear of well authenticated cases of the kind, such as are happening every day in some part of the country or other, is truly remarkable. But such things are a verity now, as much as they were in the early meetings of the Quakers; and they happen more constantly, and on an incomparably larger scale, in connexion with the preaching and the prayer-meetings of other denominations than ever was the case amongst the Friends.* Take the

* This was written before the extraordinary revivals in America, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and the North of England had called general attention to the subject—strikingly confirming, as they do, the sentiment here advocated.

following description from the autobiography of Peter Cartwright, one of the pioneer Wesleyan preachers in America, whose zeal and originality would have made him a worthy companion for Fox and Whitehead, and whose work of faith and labour of love had infinitely more in common with the burning zeal of the early Friends for the salvation of souls, than modern Quakerism would suspect, or than is possessed by the generality of the Friends themselves. It was at a camp meeting in the State of Ohio. "There were two young ladies, sisters, lately from Baltimore, or somewhere down East. They had been provided for on the ground, in the tent of a very religious sister of theirs. They were very fashionably dressed; I think they must have had, in rings, earrings, bracelets, gold chains, locketts, &c., at least one or two hundred dollars' worth of jewellery about their persons. The altar was crowded to overflowing with mourners; and these young ladies were very solemn. They met me at the stand, and asked permission to sit down inside of it. I told them that if they would promise to pray to God for religion, they might take a seat there. They were too deeply affected to be idle lookers on; and when I got them seated in the stand, I called on them and urged them to pray; and I called others to my aid. They became deeply engaged; and about midnight they were both powerfully converted. They rose to their feet, and gave some very triumphant shouts, and then very deliberately took off their gold chains, earrings, locketts, &c., and handed them to me saying, 'We have no more need of these idols. If religion is the glorious good thing you have represented it to be, it throws these into the shade.'" How similar the process and the result, to that described by Barclay! the body greatly shaken, with many groans, and sighs and tears, ending with a "*sweet sound of thanksgiving and praise.*" If it be objected, that these impressions wear off, and the subjects of them return to their former condition—there is abundant evidence that such is not the case. As shown in the parable of the sower, there will be abortive cases; but there are thousands with whom such occasions have been the turning point of a whole life—and from such seasons they have dated the change from worldly, pharisaical, or profligate and abandoned sinners, to men of faith

meekness, and sincerity, whose lives have been a triumphant witness to the power of the truth to deliver from the power as well as the guilt of sin, and who have died with glowing and radiant hopes of a blissful immortality.

On another occasion, after a desperate attempt on the part of the "Rowdies," to break up a meeting, the whole having been thrown into confusion, so that none of the other preachers felt sufficiently calm to engage in preaching, the same writer goes on,—“The encampment was lighted up, the trumpet was blown, I rose to the stand, and required every soul to leave the tents, and come to the congregation. There was a general rush to the stand. I requested the brethren, if ever they prayed in their lives, to pray now; my voice was strong and clear, and my preaching was more of an exhortation and encouragement than anything else. My text was, ‘The gates of hell shall not prevail.’ In about thirty minutes, the power of God fell on the congregation in such a manner as is seldom seen; the people fell in every direction, right and left, front and rear. It was supposed that not less than three hundred fell like dead men in mighty battle [Barclay’s own figure], and there was no need of calling mourners, for they were strewed all over the camp ground; loud wailings went up to heaven from sinners for mercy, and a general shout from Christians, so that the noise was heard afar off. Our meeting lasted all night, and Monday and Monday night; and when we closed on Tuesday, there were two hundred who had professed religion, and about that number joined the church.” It should here be explained that the new converts are not at once admitted as members, but that they are taken on trial for six months; during which time they attend a class, and partake of the privileges of members. If, however, at the end of that time, they have failed to prove, by a consistent and earnest Christian life, the reality of their profession, they are no longer regarded as members. We think that there is a weak point here in the Wesleyan system, and that it is partly the cause of those numerous declensions and low-standard members, that scandalize the world and other denominations. They do not take sufficient care to have their new converts thoroughly instructed in the duties, the dangers,

and the trials, peculiar to the Christian walk, and incident especially to its first stages—hence discouragement—the sweet sense of forgiveness and reconciliation having unexpectedly given place to a conflict with the world, and the fiery darts of the wicked one, they give up the struggle in despair—or imagining that, in the new birth, all is done that will ever be required, they settle down again into their previous habits of life, and never grow to the “measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

The same writer mentions a locality in which the discipline had degenerated very much, and to which he was appointed in the hope that he might be made instrumental in bringing about a reformation. Slave-trading and dram-drinking—those millstones on the neck of modern Christianity—were the plague spot. “There was a four weeks’ circuit, and I had no helpers; and on examination of the papers, I found over one hundred and fifty delinquent members; some, yea many of them, had not been in a class meeting for one, two, or three years. I determined with a mild and firm hand to pull the reins of our discipline; and by the aid of the leaders, and by my personally visiting the delinquents, we managed to see every one of them, and talk to them.

“Through the blessing of God upon our labours, we saved to the church about sixty of them; the others were dropped, laid aside, or expelled. This was awful work, to turn out or drop ninety persons in nine months; it bowed me down in spirit greatly; it looked as if a tornado had fearfully swept over the church; but there was a stop put to trading in slaves, and the dram-drinkers became very few, and many of them threw off their jewellery and superfluous dressing; prayer meetings sprang up, class meetings were generally attended, our congregations increased, our fasts were kept. Towards the last quarter of the year I beat up for a general rally. We had a large camp ground, seats for a thousand prepared, a large shed built over the altar and pulpit, that would shelter more than a thousand people. The square of our camp ground was well filled. The camp meeting lasted eight days and nights; the preachers preached, the power of God attended, sinners by the score fell; the altar, though very large,

was filled to overflowing; and while many managed and laboured in the altar with the mourners, we erected another stand at the opposite end of the encampment, and there the faithful minister proclaimed the word of life. The power of God came there as the sound of a rushing mighty wind; and such was the effect, that crowds of mourners came forward and kneeled at the benches prepared, and indeed the work spread over all the encampment, and in almost every tent. There were two hundred and fifty who professed religion, and one hundred and seventy joined the church, besides about forty coloured people. Glory to God! Zion travailed and brought forth many sons and daughters to God."

How idle, with such results as these in view, so similar to those described by Barclay, constantly attending on the labours of the early Friends, and now on those of the Wesleyans and others, to stand upon the distinction between prophecy and teaching, or to maintain that the preaching, or teaching, or call it what we will, that produces, under God's blessings, such results as these, is a denial of Christ!

The same preacher was on one occasion reluctantly present at a ball held at an inn where he was staying—the ball room being the only room in the house for the entertainment of guests. During an interval in the proceedings, a handsome young lady stepped up to the preacher, and invited him to dance with her. Acting on the impulse of the moment, he took her hand, and stepped into the middle of the floor. All eyes were turned upon them. He then said that he had not done anything of importance for many years without first asking the blessing of God, and that he desired to ask that blessing on the beautiful young lady and the whole company who had shown such an act of politeness to a total stranger. He instantly knelt down, and began praying with all the power that he could command. "The young lady," he proceeds, "tried to get loose from me, but I held her tight. Presently she fell on her knees. Some of the company fled—some sat still—all looked curious. The fiddler ran off into the kitchen, saying 'Lord a marcy, what de matter? what is dis mean?' While I prayed, some wept out aloud, and some cried out for mercy. I rose from my knees and commenced an exhortation, after

which I sang an hymn. The young lady who invited me on the floor lay prostrate, crying earnestly for mercy. I exhorted again: I sang and prayed nearly all night. About fifteen of that company professed religion, and our meeting lasted next day and next night, and as many more were powerfully converted. I organized a society, took thirty-two into the church, and sent them a preacher. My landlord was appointed leader, which post he held for many years. This was the commencement of a great and glorious revival of religion in that region of country, and several of the young men converted at this Methodist preacher's dance became useful ministers of Jesus Christ."

What, we may ask, might not the Friends have done, had they kept up the clear light and the burning zeal of their early days, by means of a systematic ministry? The fields are still white to the harvest. The seed is never freely sown without some fruit to eternal life. And what, on the other hand, we may ask, would have been the state of the world now, if other and more systematic evangelists had not arisen and entered the field abandoned by the Friends? who now, finding themselves cut off, by the gradual but sure operation of their silent system, from the great work with which they set out, are content to exert a kind of collateral influence on the world at large; shut out to a great extent from religious intercourse with others, and finding their appointed work in bearing a *silent testimony* "against a variety of particular practices, affecting partly the worship of God and partly his moral law, which are still prevalent, not only among unregenerate men, but among sincere Christians." * Alas! could Fox, and Whitehead and Burrough have supposed that their dawning of the dayspring would have degenerated into a negative affair of this description, they surely would have seen the necessity of adopting some systematic arrangement for the perpetuation of a living ministry, and of that perpetually incumbent duty of seeking and saving the lost—going into the highways and hedges to compel them to come in; a work so faithfully and zealously and successfully executed in the early days of the Society, but which has now been complacently relinquished, to be taken up by others—who, however their mode of opera-

* J. J. Gurney's "Observations," p. 433.

tion may differ, certainly are encouraged by results precisely identical with those that attended the best days of the Friends.

One more instance we shall give from the same writer. On one occasion, two young gentlemen were present at a large camp-meeting under very peculiar circumstances. "They were both paying their addresses to a very wealthy young lady. Some jealousy about rivalry sprang up between them; they were mutually jealous of each other, and it spread like an eating cancer. They quarrelled, and finally fought; both armed themselves, and each bound himself with a solemn oath to kill the other. Thus sworn, and armed with pistols and dirks, they attended the camp-meeting. I was acquainted with them, and apprised of the circumstances of this disagreeable affair. On Sunday, when I was addressing a large congregation, and was trying to enforce the terrors of the violated law of God, there was a visible power, more than human, resting on the congregation; many fell under the preaching of the word. In closing my discourse, I called for mourners to come to the altar. Both these young men were in the congregation, and the Holy Spirit had convicted each of them; their murderous hearts yielded under the mighty power of God, and with dreadful feelings they made for the altar. One entered on the right, the other on the left. Each was perfectly ignorant of the other being there. I went deliberately to each of them, and took their deadly weapons from their bosoms, and carried them into the preachers' tent, and then returned and laboured faithfully with them and others—for the altar was full—nearly all the afternoon and night. These young men had a sore struggle; but the great deep of their hearts was broken up, and they cried hard for mercy; and while I was kneeling by one of them, just before break of day, the Lord spoke peace to his wounded soul. He rose in triumph, and gave some thrilling shouts. I hastened to the other young man, at the other side of the altar, and in less than fifteen minutes God powerfully blessed his soul, and he rose and shouted victory; and as these young men faced about they saw each other, and starting simultaneously, met about midway of the altar, and instantly clasped each other in their arms. What a shout went up to heaven from

these two young men, and almost the whole assembly that were present! There were a great many more who were converted that night; and, indeed, it was a night long to be remembered for the clear conversion of souls. One of these young men made an able itinerant preacher: he travelled a few years, had a brilliant career, and spread a holy fire wherever he went; he then fell sick, lingered a little while, and died triumphantly. There was a remarkable instance of the power of religion in the change of these two young men. A few hours before, they were sworn enemies, thirsting for each other's blood; but now, all these murderous feelings were removed from them, and, behold! their hearts were filled with love. Old things were done away, and all things become new."*

Let those who will, be sceptical as to the genuineness of results like these, because they are connected with excitement. They come to us as fully authenticated as any of the results of the Friends' early labours—they are taking place every day—and though there are abortive cases, still the number of genuine conversions, resulting in holy and useful lives, and peaceful and often triumphant deaths, will bear the test of the Great Master, "By their fruits ye shall know them," and stamp this method of winning souls with the eminent approval of God.

* Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONVERSION AN ESSENTIAL PRELUDE TO THE MINISTRY.

Why should the children of a King
Go mourning all their days ?
Great Comforter, descend and bring
The tokens of thy grace.

Dost thou not dwell in all thy saints,
And seal the heirs of heaven ?
When wilt thou banish my complaints,
And show my sins forgiven ?

Assure my conscience of its part
In the Redeemer's blood ;
And bear thy witness with my heart,
That I am born of God.

WESLEYAN HYMN-BOOK.

By neglecting to labour for the conversion of souls in a systematic and earnest manner, the Friends lose the best possible opportunity for diffusing their truly evangelical doctrines with regard to the spirituality of the present dispensation, the unlawfulness of war, &c., &c. When Divine grace has visited the heart, and thorough conviction for sin has been followed by sincere repentance, and acceptance of mercy in Christ Jesus, accompanied by a distinct and lively consciousness of forgiveness and reconciliation,—the soul is left in an humble teachable state, in which the great doctrine of forgiveness of enemies—striking, as it effectually does, at the root of war, and conditional as it is of the sinner's forgiveness by God—would, if taught, be accepted with readiness, unless previous mis-teaching had prejudiced the mind against it. We have seen this result spontaneously arising in the case of the rival lovers: it is the same with the heathens, whose minds have been, before, a *tabula rasa*, ready to

receive any impressions, and to follow the leadings of the truth to their fullest development. Thus it was with Titus Africanus and Jan Ortman, as mentioned by James Backhouse in his Journal. They were two chiefs of hostile tribes. Fresh from recent conflict—the conquered still burning for revenge—they were both converted under the preaching of the word at different missionary stations. They subsequently met at one of the stations. They looked at each other for a moment, then rushed forward and embraced each other, and, forgetting all their former animosity, sat down to tell each other of the great things that God had done for them. Such is the legitimate result of true conversion; but when, instead of this, a low standard of Christian duty is maintained and taught, and the newly-awakened soul is either trained or permitted to believe that war and revenge can, in any sense, be compatible with *that spirit of forgiveness of which he is just experiencing the benefit from his* HEAVENLY FATHER, and the exercise of which to his fellow-men is made the absolute condition of his own forgiveness, his standard of Christian duty is immediately lowered, and his fervency of spirit cooled down to a fearful extent, and he remains, through life, unless subsequently enlightened, an imperfectly-awakened child of God, incapable of bringing forth fruit as he might have done, and unprepared to make those sacrifices which the cause of Christ is continually demanding, and ready to acquiesce in a correspondingly low and selfish standard of duty in other particulars. Hence it is, that we find the great bulk of Christians, at the present day, lending their sanctions to war, with its inseparable iniquities and horrors, under the plea that though war and Christianity are incompatible, still “the world is not prepared” for carrying out this principle;—as if the condition of the world could, by any possibility, affect the responsibility of the Christian to his great Lawgiver. But few there are who are willing to bear the cross and to confess Christ among men. The great mass of Christians, in these degenerate times, propose to themselves to wear the crown without having first borne the cross. It is, in fact, not the *world*, but the CHURCH that is NOT PREPARED: and never will the *world* be prepared until the CHURCH shows her allegiance to Christ,

by faithfully acting out his commands to the letter, rejoicing to do all, suffer all, and, if needs be, lose all, for his sake.

The great injunction of Christ, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," is just as much neglected. This very thing, forbidden as it is in the most plain and peremptory manner, is the one idea with the great mass of our Christian people—the sum and centre of their hopes. It is intimately connected with the point just referred to. Any person who will act in the spirit of early days—when the believers "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods," and rejoiced to be counted worthy to suffer with Christ, if so be they might also reign with Him—will be safe to-morrow, without a standing army, or deadly weapons of any kind.

Intimately connected with the two points referred to, is the right use of property, in alleviating distress, and helping to spread abroad the truth. If the Churches were up to the New Testament standard in this respect, if they would decline to show any respect of persons in their places of worship, not invite the man with gold chains and costly apparel to the best seats, while the poor shabbily-dressed worshipper is thrust into some obscure corner; if they would diligently seek out cases of true suffering, and freely distribute to the necessities of the poor, according to the full extent of the means that God has given them for that very purpose, and not rest satisfied with general expressions of sympathy, unattended with any exertions, or any sacrifice, for the alleviation of distress, there would be little surplus wealth to protect, and little disposition to commit depredations, and the Church would be delivered from one of the most fatal snares. Wealth no longer being regarded as the ultimatum—the one thing to be desired—the keen and dishonest competition that now prevails, even amongst high professors, would be at an end; the disposition to add field to field, and house to house, and shop to shop, until there is no room to dwell, would receive a wholesome check; and men, having realized a moderate competency, would gladly retire from business, and, leaving the field open for their younger brethren, devote their own leisure to the Christ-like employment of going about doing good to the bodies and souls of men.

So obviously does the necessity for the Christian to consecrate his whole life, and strength, and substance, to the cause of his Lord and Master, appear to arise out of the very nature and condition of our salvation through Christ, that we cannot conceive it possible for the position of that Church, or that individual, to be a right one, which admits of a condition of rest or ease in this present life. We feel assured that those who can rest satisfied with a state of inaction and of ease, of merely negative or collateral influence in the great work of winning souls to Christ, of snatching sinners as brands from the burning, of obeying the injunction of the Lord of the feast, "Go ye into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in," are falling far short of their high calling.—Not compel, in the sense of brute force, or penalties for refusal, but of urgent importunate request,—such urgency as should compel the forlorn wanderer to feel that he is an object of earnest solicitude, instead of having to exclaim, "No man careth for my soul;" such urgency as is manifested by the great Apostle of the Gentiles, when he exclaims, "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Sinners are dying in their sins every moment, who might be reclaimed and brought into the folds of Christ. The humblest and feeblest labourers who, in the love of Christ, go to these forlorn ones, prayerfully, believingly, have their labours crowned with success; no one need stand idle, all are called, all who are themselves converted may be instrumental in turning others from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. It is to be feared, that many who lay claim to the heavenly inheritance, and at the same time do not forsake all to follow Christ in the way of the cross, will find themselves grievously mistaken at last. Those who are truly alive in Christ Jesus, can find no line of demarcation excusing them from some of the labours and the crosses that are to be the portion of all that would work out the design of their Creator and Redeemer. It will not be merely as a matter of duty, however, or as a necessary condition, that they will fulfil this allotted work of faith and labour of love; but because, in proportion as they are renewed in the spirit of their mind, and have imbibed

Christ's spirit of love and self-sacrifice, their zeal will burn with a lively flame—they will find in such an employment their native element, their daily bread.

Those who seek to reconcile a life of ease with a prospect of heaven, know little of that process of refining and purification by which, if they are ever to pass the gates of pearl, a meetness must be brought about for the heavenly kingdom. The world has smiled upon them: they have never known the terrors of the Lord for sin, or his forgiving, reconciling grace: having had little or nothing forgiven, their love is proportionably cold. Brought up, it may be, in a system of educational and external propriety, spoken well of by men, and surrounded by the good things of this life,—a routine of dry barren forms, whose truths faintly touch the understanding, but fail to reach the heart, is all that their carnal souls can appreciate; and the zeal and impetuous earnestness of the true minister of Christ, and the outcries of the awakened sinner, trembling on the verge of eternal wrath, are to them little else than sheer extravagance and affectation.

These dwellers at ease in Zion, these enterers into other men's labours and sufferings, would do well to contemplate the description of the happy multitude before the Throne:—"These are they that have come through MUCH tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb; THEREFORE are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night continually"—or as described in Hebrews xi. 37—"They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep skins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented." Or with profound instruction they might contemplate the Man of Sorrows, whose visage, for their sakes was "so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." Let them hear Him saying, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Let them think of the martyrs of their own and other lands—torn in pieces by wild beasts—thrown headlong over steep rocks—racked by slow tortures of fire and water and steel, in which all the elements of nature and all the ingenuity of man, and all the malice of devils have

been exhausted in making the fires of persecution hotter, and the lingering torment fiercer, to wear out, if possible, the saints of the Most High. Let them think of their own forefathers in the truth, who, but two hundred years ago, rotted in damp dungeons, or perished by fever in overcrowded and pestilential gaols, winging their way from a martyr's life of suffering and a martyr's death to wear a martyr's crown. And then let them ask themselves, in their complacent pursuit of wealth, or science, or natural history, or creature good, and creature comfort, and creature enjoyment,—how much they have in common with such spirits? how far they are prepared just now to give up their cherished idols in favour of the Redeemer's cause? how far they are *finding their life* in the things of time, evanescent and unsatisfying as they are, instead of the things of eternity?—what proof they are NOW EVERY DAY giving of their oneness with the Father and the Son, and their meetness for the heavenly kingdom, in the diligent performance of THOSE WORKS by WHICH FAITH IS MADE PERFECT?

The messages of the Spirit to the churches of Asia may be studied with great instruction, in connexion with this subject. It is truly remarkable, that not one of those churches is charged with doing TOO MUCH—with over-wrought zeal; but with doing too little—not bringing forth fruit to perfection. In strict harmony with this, we find Christ urging his disciples to bring forth fruit, and showing them, in a thousand varied ways, the necessity of labouring and struggling without intermission, of maintaining a continual warfare against sin in themselves and in the world—not as the ground of their acceptance, but as their proper element and high privilege—at once the proof of their faith and love, and the means of strengthening all their graces. He never once warns them against the danger of doing too much, or of sacrificing too much for his cause. *Misguided* zeal is possible—*excess* of zeal never.

The church of Ephesus had left her first love, and she was counselled thus:—"Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy FIRST WORKS."

To the church of Smyrna the Spirit says, approvingly,—“I know

thy WORKS, and thy TRIBULATION, and thy POVERTY: but thou art RICH."

To Pergamos,—“I know thy WORKS.”

To Thyatira,—“I know thy works, and charity, and service, and thy WORKS; and THE LAST TO BE MORE THAN THE FIRST.” This church is not counselled to repent, “But,” saith the Spirit, “that which ye have already, HOLD FAST till I come.”

In the address to the church at Sardis the Friends may see their condition graphically portrayed:—“I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” Not absolutely, irrecoverably dead; but benumbed—cold—lifeless: else why the injunction which the Friends will do well to ponder—“Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy WORKS PERFECT before God.”

To Philadelphia the encouraging language is addressed,—“I know thy WORKS”—followed by the injunction, “HOLD FAST that thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

The lukewarm state of the Laodiceans appears to have been peculiarly offensive to the Spirit, and still the works are referred to:—“I know THY WORKS, that thou art neither cold nor hot, I would thou wert cold or hot. So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.” And this was the Church which said, “I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing.” The Friends sometimes boast, when announcing the annual balance of their “National Stock,” that they are the only society in the Kingdom that has a considerable surplus. When the whole amount, however, that they are spending and doing for the spread of the kingdom of Christ is considered, we fear there will be little room for complacency. We have heard a very zealous and orthodox Quaker say, that he thought little of that religion which is not equally profitable for both worlds, and that honour and worldly comfort are the legitimate concomitants of true religion. We do not say that they are never found together; but we maintain that thorough adherence to Christian principle, in all its bearings on the affairs of life will, as an INEVITABLE consequence, involve

the individual who exercises it in loss, persecution, and contempt. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." The man who thus tries to reconcile both worlds, shuts himself out from the highest blessings and most glorious privileges of the believer. He can have no conception of that exalted inner life, which is THE LIFE of the believer—that intimate union with God, and assimilation to HIS nature, which constitutes having "the mind of Christ." It is necessary to this high and blessed attainment, that he should be thoroughly emptied of self, and that he should present himself as "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." The blessings enumerated in Matt. v. 1, will then be his happy experience. Creature comforts and worldly honours will have lost their attractions for him; he will count it all joy when he falls into divers temptations, *i. e.* trials, knowing that the trying of his faith worketh patience; he will rejoice in tribulation, and instead of shrinking from every little sacrifice, and dreading every abridgment of his comforts, he will rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ, and to endure hardness as one of his good soldiers. Such an one, so far from being taken up with the enjoyments of time, even if he have them at command, will be filled with mourning, on account of his own short-comings and imperfections, in the first place, and then for the sins and sorrows of a lost, guilty, fallen world. This very mourning is blessed—pre-eminently blessed; but it is totally incompatible with creature comfort and ease, or with the kind of pleasure derived from worldly success or honour. The hungering and thirsting after righteousness, on which the blessing is pronounced, is intimately connected with the mourning. It is a longing which nothing earthly can ever satisfy, but which may be effectually DEADENED and BLUNTED by even the lawful and "harmless" pursuits of commerce or of pleasure. The Great Master spake not in vain, when He said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple," Luke xiv. 25, 26—a hatred not incompatible with the highest and fullest exercise of all the holy

affections of our nature, or militating against the faithful discharge of all the duties of life ; but implying a supreme love for Christ and his cause, in comparison of which, all other objects must be placed in a degree of subordination, which to the unregenerate and uninitiated would seem to indicate actual hatred. Not less exalted is the blessing to the peacemaker—to the man who, in the spirit of Christ, restores peace and love, where anger and revenge were brooding, and brings about the reconciliation of long parted friends. Christ is pre-eminently the peacemaker, his is the ministration of reconciliation ; and those who, in His spirit, yearning over lost souls, bring the forlorn and despairing wanderer to the foot of the cross, proclaiming God's love in Christ to a rebellious and unhappy world, enjoy a measure of that joy which Christ had set before Him, when He endured the cross, despising the shame. "They that be wise shall shine as the light ; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever." He that gives to a disciple a cup of cold water only, shall not lose his reward ; and God shall render to every man according to his work.

CHAPTER XVII.

CARE OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness ; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."—GAL. vi. 1, 2.

"And let us consider ONE ANOTHER, to provoke unto love and good works : not forsaking the assembling of OURSELVES together, as the manner of some is ; but exhorting one another : and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."—HEB. x. 24, 25.

ANOTHER particular intimately connected with the topics already referred to, in which the system of the Friends appears peculiarly defective, is the provision of efficient means for ascertaining the spiritual

condition of individual members at short intervals, and cherishing in them a steady and earnest attention to the things of the unseen world. The office of the overseer has degenerated into that of an inspector or policeman, who is supposed not to have any part to perform until actual misdemeanour renders it necessary to take cognizance of a brother or sister as a delinquent. But this is only half meeting the exigencies of the case. Infinitely more may be done by direct efforts to encourage good tendencies, than by the discouragement of bad ones. Not that we would have the latter neglected, by any means; but one thing we are sure of—that the negative duty of repression will never be so faithfully and vigorously executed, as when the positive duty of encouraging the good is discharged to the full. “These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” The man who sows no good seeds may weed his ground as he will, but he cannot expect a crop; while he who ploughs and sows with all diligence will find much of his labour frustrated and his hopes blighted, if he neglect to clear the ground and keep under the encroaching weeds. Discipline is essential to the health and welfare of the Church; but it would come with a better grace, if the delinquent had not been left almost entirely to himself, and without, perhaps, a single direct intimation that any one felt a kindly interest in his spiritual welfare.

The manner in which the ranks of the Friends are filled up by birthright membership, while it has a tendency to lessen the feeling of the necessity for this kind of care, is, if possible, an additional reason for its sedulous exercise. No Church can be complete or permanently efficient, that does not make systematic provision for the immediate and constant oversight of its young converts and less experienced members. Constant and immediate personal intercourse with the experienced and loving members of the Church—the men full of the Holy Ghost—is, perhaps, of all means that could be mentioned, next to watching and prayer, the most efficacious in counteracting the chilling influence of the world and the insidious machinations of the soul’s enemy. The influence of constant intercourse among the bad, and in connexion with false systems, is too

well understood. "Evil communications corrupt good manners;" and good communications as effectually encourage and promote good manners. John Wesley very soon found the advantage of affording an opportunity for the seekers after salvation and the young converts, to express their doubts and difficulties to some one of greater experience and knowledge than themselves; and out of these opportunities arose the Wesleyan class-meeting—an arrangement very much misunderstood by the world at large, having nothing in common with the Romish confessional, as some have imagined, but constituting a means of strengthening and encouraging the young or tempted believer, and drawing closer the bonds of religious fellowship, which those who have once learned to appreciate will be very reluctant to forego. Whitfield, the contemporary of Wesley, lived to see and acknowledge the vast importance of some such arrangement. He lived to see the fruits of his own labours scattered, in a great measure, while those of Wesley were becoming more and more established; and to his own omission to establish some organization analogous to the class-meetings, Whitfield attributed the scattering that he had to lament.

There can be no doubt that the Friends have suffered from the same cause. The preaching of the Gospel, however efficiently, will fail to a great extent, unless followed up by personal appeals, showing an interest felt by individuals in the spiritual welfare of their neighbours as individuals. It is probable, that but for the prayer-meetings following the preaching of the Gospel, and the concern shown on behalf of awakened sinners, not one-tenth of the conversions would take place that now crown the labours of the Churches. How much more needful, then, must this kind of care be amongst the Friends, whose utterances from the gallery are so few, and so incomplete, and where the prayer-meeting is altogether wanting! Intimately connected with this state of things is the absence amongst them of anything like a direct encouragement of the work of conversion. The necessity for it is admitted; but here, again, seeing that it can only be accomplished by the influence of the Holy Spirit, they overlook the part that man has to perform, *instrumentally*, in bringing to

bear upon his fellow-man that influence of the Spirit. Little, comparatively, is heard amongst them of conversion. So long as a member is "consistent" with regard to the peculiarities, and free from any known breach of the moral law, he is left to himself; he may live to advanced age, and even hold office in the Society, and take a part in its discipline, and still be an entire stranger to that filial trust in a reconciled God, which results from the hearty reception of Christ as the alone Saviour, which is essential to true conversion, and which forms the only sound basis for good works or true morality. The Friends in general have a decided aversion to any conversation on such subjects, and regard as pharisaical, or presumptuous, any expression of experience in regard to this important work. Members with full privilege by birth, any attempt to distinguish between the converted and the unconverted, the sheep and the goats, the children of the Kingdom and the children of the wicked one, would be extremely invidious. The very fact of being a member of such a Society, must in itself, like infant baptism, have a tendency to lessen the feeling of responsibility and of the necessity for a change of heart, and a regeneration into the invisible Church of Christ, whose Head is in heaven, and whose members are scattered over the face of the wide earth, even all those who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, whatever their name, or creed, or colour, or clime. In the early days of the Society, none of the young people were admitted to the meetings for discipline, unless, from their evident interest in Divine things, they were *invited* to sit with their brethren on whom the care of the Churches rested.

In the absence of the genuine test which true conversion, followed by a consistent life and conversation, affords, the Friends have exalted "consistency" in a technical sense to a position which it has no right to occupy. The great question, in all questions of conduct not universally condemned as immoral, now is, not are they right or wrong, are they expedient or inexpedient, but are they consistent? that is, consistent with Quakerism *as it is*. If the young Friend is exhorted not to attend the theatre or the concert or not to practice music, the sole reason supposed to be necessary is, that they

are "not consistent." This is, no doubt, a ready mode of settling many a knotty question; but it is one which, in the long run, is calculated to effect much mischief. It takes the place of training and instruction, and bases its influence on the authority of the Church; and however satisfactory it may be to the orthodox adviser, whose reasons may be of the best character, would he but be at the pains kindly and intelligently to unfold them, it cannot possibly carry conviction, or give satisfaction, to the young and ardent devotee of pleasure, who can see "no harm" in this and the other indulgence, and is not likely to do, unless instructed by some more diligent teachers than he finds in his own Church, until bitter experience tells him that "the way of transgressors is hard." While forming an ineffectual barrier against evil, this test of "consistency" operates, at the same time, in a powerful manner against many things that are of the most beneficial character; and which, though objected to at first, as "inconsistent for Friends," are afterwards vigorously adopted, first by individual members, and then by the Society at large. It was thus with the temperance movement. The first Friends that took a part in that magnificent and Divinely sanctioned movement, designed and calculated as it is to remove one of the greatest curses that ever afflicted the Church or the world, were solemnly warned by the orthodox, that they were very "inconsistent" in taking part in such organizations. They persevered, however, and now there is not, perhaps, a religious community in which the principle has a more decided support, or by whom, though some of the old school of objectors are likely long to protest, it is likely sooner to be recognized as an essential part of Church polity.

In one particular after another, however, this equivocal standard of consistency is being set aside; and with regard to music, dress and address, the occasional attendance of other places of worship, right or wrong, consistent or inconsistent, the magic cord is coming to be broken with increasing frequency and diminished sense of impropriety. This loosening of long standing prejudices we hail, in some respects, as a harbinger of good; but it carries with it a serious admixture of evil. The fictitious standard being gone, there is no real

one to take its place, and thus the young Friend, having once shaken off the control of "consistency," is left almost without rudder or compass, to pick his way amid the terrible snares of a bewitching world and the bewildering teachings of false systems of religion—ending, as has too often been the case, in a total wreck of all that is good and noble in character, in the paths of vice and folly, or an ardent adoption of some false and soul-seducing system of religion—often as diametrically at variance with the true teachings of the society he has left, as light is to darkness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MINOR PECULIARITIES.

"Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, do ye seek to be made perfect in the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain."—GAL. iii. 3, 4.

"Stand fast therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."—GAL. v. 1.

NEXT, perhaps, to the neglect of a provision for the systematic preaching of the Gospel, and for the *direct encouragement* of the spiritual life in the individual members,—what are called the minor peculiarities of the Friends have exerted a prejudicial influence on the vitality of the Society, cramped its energy, and materially diminished its usefulness in the world at large. Regarding these "minor peculiarities" of dress, address, &c., as the results of the Holy Spirit's teaching, they have been unwilling to suppose that their influence could be any other than beneficial—and the injuries arising from this source have been diligently attributed to other causes. Nay, further, regarding the whole system as a "chain graciously constructed for important and desirable purposes" which "may be severed by the lapse of its smallest, as well as by that of its largest link,"* they have given to their peculiarities of dress and manners

* J. J. Gurney's "Observations," p. 439.

an importance, *practically, so far as the life of the Society is concerned*, equal to that of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

Here, again, is apparent, the injurious effect of confounding *man's conclusions with reference to the teachings of the Spirit*, with the Spirit, and giving to the deductions of Fox, Barclay, and others, from the Scriptures, an authority equal to that of Christ himself. Such being the exalted opinion entertained of the origin of the "minor peculiarities," it will not be surprising if the Friends discover in them great and peculiar advantages. Accordingly it is a common observation with weighty Friends—and J. J. Gurney has expressed it (p. 432)—that "when any persons amongst us allow themselves to disuse the customary language, deportment, and dress of Friends, the effect very often produced is this,—that they become negligent of our other testimonies, gradually depart from religious communion with us, and finally join themselves with Christian societies of less strictness, or * merge in the irreligious world." * He adds that the same result is likely to follow from the sacrifice of those "protecting peculiarities;" and that if they were generally given up, the change would "naturally introduce a relaxation respecting those major ones which arise out of the SAME ROOT; and the line of demarcation by which we are *so providentially surrounded* being removed, there would be little to prevent our *being completely mixed up with general society*." This, he apprehends, would go so far as to involve the loss of "the high and conspicuous standard which it is now the privilege of the Society to uphold, respecting the Christian law of peace, and respecting the complete spirituality of the Gospel dispensation." And is it come to this, that the Society that two hundred years ago braved the fiercest persecution, and made itself conspicuous by its firm, persevering, and undaunted preaching of the Gospel, in the midst of the most discouraging circumstances, and whose members were most effectually distinguished from the rest of the world by their extraordinary zeal, and the pre-eminent holiness and integrity of their lives, now require a broad-brimmed hat, a straight collar, and an indescribable bonnet, with a blanket shawl, in order to enable them to maintain their high

* "Observations," p. 434.

principles, or to avoid merging in general society? As to the standard held up to the world at the present day, we fear that the writer here reckons without his host. Alas! it is too notorious, that the once bright light of the Friends, who were as a city set on an hill, is now for the most part concealed under a bushel, and the rest of the world, for whose benefit they complacently imagine they are holding up a conspicuous standard, scarcely take cognizance of them at all, except as a very peculiar and totally incomprehensible, though very well meaning people.

If such be the necessary connexion between the "minor peculiarities," these quaint and antiquated modes of dress and manners, and the great fundamental truths of the Gospel, it is rather surprising, that amongst the various modes of escaping the contaminations of the world and preserving religious life, this peculiar form of dress was not prescribed by Christ himself. Alas! no, here the Friends, once so earnest in their protest against mere forms, have become the veriest of formalists. Say what they will, they do actually attach a virtue to a peculiar form of dress; and we fear that the importance which the Friends have allowed to gather round this part of their system, instead of being the safeguard that they imagine, is one chief cause of their weakness. The figure of the chain is a peculiarly unhappy one. Were it all of Divine fabrication, and the material Divinely provided, then we admit that no one link might be severed with impunity. He that shall break the least of Christ's commandments, and teach men so, shall be counted least in the kingdom of heaven. But it is not here that the weakness lies: it is in the human element. This the Friends are extremely reluctant to admit, because they maintain that the founders of the Society were Divinely led in its formation, and that these peculiarities of dress and manners are the teachings of the Holy Spirit. But here, as in the case of the ministry, it is possible that a certain measure of human deduction may have mixed itself up with the Divine teaching—and that the Christian duty of *plainness*, like that of *waiting*, may have received, with the Friends, a technical application which converts, in process of time, a living principle into a mere formality.

Little as the peculiarities as they now exist—at least with regard to dress—were contemplated by the Friends, yet, having grown into their present form, they are now, as we have seen, regarded as an integral and essential portion of the system. It is very common to hear them compared to a “hedge,” or “external bulwark, by which Friends, considered as a religious community, are separated from the world, and in some degree defended from its influence.” We fear that much more importance has been attached to this external bulwark than it really merits; indeed, it is too obvious, that in proportion as it is a hedge, it is also a snare. It does not prevent the unprincipled and the hypocrite from frequenting scenes of dissipation and worldly gaiety; they change their costume for the occasion. It is not needed by the truly sincere and devoted Christian—he would be altogether out of his element in such scenes—and by far the greater proportion of such characters, in every age, have had no such hedge to protect them; and yet, without its aid, millions have, through Divine grace, successfully combated the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is, then, to the partially awakened, the weak in faith, or the young and inexperienced believer, that it is to be useful, if at all. But to this class it can only be rendered useful by the exercise of an amount of faithfulness and self-denial, which without its aid would be equally efficacious. So far, however, from exerting any beneficial influence, we believe that it operates in a directly injurious manner, placing the class just referred to, in common with all the members, under an incessant temptation to insincerity, which is notoriously too strong to be resisted, even by many of the highly approved officers, and even ministers, of the Society.

If it be objected, that the Friend is in a different position from other Christians, because he has been educated in the practice of these peculiarities, and that they thus have a claim on his conscientious regard which they have not upon others—that to *him* they are binding on this account—then we answer, that is the very strongest argument that could possibly be brought to show their injurious tendency. If they are part and parcel of the Christian's duty as laid down by Christ, they are as much binding on the rest of the world as on the

Friends; and if they are not part of that duty, then is their imposition an *unnecessary*, and therefore unwarranted, *addition* to the cross, which, though light in comparison with that of sin, is already heavy enough—an arbitrary narrowing of the way, already strait enough, that leadeth unto life. The forms of temptation are numerous enough, without our thus artificially increasing their number. As well might people argue, that because a quantity of rock or earth had fallen from a cliff above, and blocked up a road already narrow, no effort should be made to clear the road, because the impediment had come there in the ordering of Providence.

We have already observed that a coat of peculiar cut is not an essential requisite to the maintenance of Christian purity and integrity. But, it will be replied, the Friends do not contend for a different cut—it is for Gospel plainness only that they contend. This ground, however, cannot be maintained. If it be so, why is the different cut perpetuated? why are the young men warned against office-coats and summer-coats as leading to unfaithfulness? why are members who adopt the rolling collar told that they are thus unfitted to take office in the schools of the Society, or to be acknowledged as ministers?—and applicants for membership, though dressed as plainly as any of the orthodox, required to adopt the “plain coat” before they can be admitted? All these things are done; and whatever loosening of prejudice there may be in some directions, every indication of a more liberal disposition is mourned over, and watched with an anxious eye, by the far greater portion of those who give its weight and character to the Society.

Plainness of dress is most undoubtedly a Christian duty, and extravagance and gaiety in dress one of the most common and successful of the baits of Satan; and what J. J. Gurney remarks is true of Christian plainness—viz., that it requires much less time, and engrosses less thought and attention, than fashionable attire. But this remark will not at all apply to the quaint and obsolete costume of the Friends. It is notorious that the “plain” coat and bonnet require an extraordinary amount of care and skill in their manufacture, in order to suit modern ideas of neatness, which renders it

often an affair of considerable difficulty to get suited. The fabrication of the bonnet is a business in itself—*sui generis*—and the ladies have sometimes to send for them two or three hundred miles. Every one acquainted with the advertising sheet of the *Friend* some years ago, must have been made aware, from the announcement of Sayce and Co., of the extreme merit that attaches to the making of a Friend's coat of approved style and fit. The great design, then, of Christian plainness and simplicity in dress, is defeated by this very *peculiarity*. More thought is, in consequence, given to these matters, by many Friends, than by any except the most fastidious of the world at large. It is a common subject of remark with shopkeepers and fabricators of clothing, that the Friends are the most difficult to please of any customers they have. An eighth of an inch too much in the breadth of a brim or the height of a crown, is enough to cause the article to be thrown upon the hands of the unfortunate tradesman, who must order, perhaps, two or three to be made specially for the punctilious Quaker before satisfaction can be given.

But there is a further evil attending this peculiarity of dress and manners. It gives an air of assumed sanctity to the wearer, which is as opposite to the true spirit of Quakerism as light is to darkness—giving to the *whole Society* the character of a distinct class, just as the *priesthood* of Rome and other establishments distinguish themselves by their peculiar costumes. Here, again, extremes meet. To such an extent does this resemblance exist, that some of the more venerable Quakers pride themselves on account of their having been taken for dignitaries of the Established Church.

But J. J. Gurney himself points out a still more formidable tendency of the system, and one which has done its work to an extent which, conscious as he was of the danger, he would have felt little disposed to acknowledge. Having first alluded to the dangers of latitudinarianism, he adds, "We ought by no means to forget those which are equally inseparable from the formalist. Such is the weakness, such the deceitfulness of our hearts, that our very abstinence from forms may sometimes become formal, and our several religious peculiarities may be maintained in the spirit of the Scribes and

Pharisees, who paid 'tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and omitted the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith.'” Such, precisely, has been the effect of the peculiarities of the Friends. They have been rested in, to the neglect of much more important matters; and infinitely more pains have been taken to check the deviations of young people in these respects, than to ascertain their actual religious condition, to fortify them against temptation by sedulously and systematically imbuing their minds with lofty principles, and to induce them, by words of tender and affectionate encouragement, to give themselves unreservedly to the Lord. So completely is the peculiar dress identified with all that is implied in being a member of the Society, that when a young man adopts a coat with a rolling collar, though there may be no other index to any change in his sentiments and feelings, it is immediately said that “he has thrown off the Friend.” There is melancholy evidence in all this, of the extent to which those whose concern it is to watch over the spiritual welfare of the young and the weak in faith, have allowed themselves to be duped by this external conformity. They little know how the barren soul has been pining and shrinking in its narrow prison, finding no adequate supply for its feelings after immortality and the life of God in the soul: they mistake for the *cause*, that which is in reality the *result* of spiritual deadness—little imagining that the true cause lies in their failure to supply the material and the motive, so far as *human agency is designed to do*, of growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

J. J. Gurney was probably very little aware of the extent to which his caution was required, or of the immense influence that this one cause has had in lessening the influence of the Society and diminishing its vitality, when he wrote,—“All of us who are attached by the force of long-continued habit to the practices of Friends, have great need of watchfulness, lest we fall into the snare of the enemy; lest, while he leaves us the figure or shell, he rob us of the kernel.” This state of things has been realized to a fearful extent: and, indeed, it is precisely what was to be expected from the circumstances of the case;

for it must be obvious, upon the slightest reflection, that whatever non-essential is set up as a duty—whatever obligation is imposed upon believers which the law of Christ does not require—lays the conscience under artificial and unnecessary obligation, and thus, sooner or later, becomes a source of confusion to the moral sense, and hence a hindrance and a snare. The new law gives rise to a new form of temptation—to which certain individuals find themselves exposed, over and above those which they have to combat in common with the world at large—a temptation arising, not out of any of the natural impulses of the depraved heart, nor any of God's commands to mankind in general, but out of the artificial circumstances, the arbitrary regulations amidst and under which the Friend finds himself placed. In childhood, and in an unrenewed state, the reasons for these restrictions cannot be appreciated, and the yoke is therefore most felt when there is least of conviction or of principle to sustain it. The vast importance attached to its being borne, gives to unfaithfulness in this respect a character of sinfulness so nearly on a par with infractions of the moral law, that there is no alternative left for the unsophisticated mind between either submission on the ground of human authority alone, or, as is too frequently the case, a general aversion to the whole system of duty to God and man, of which it is made to pass for an integral part. No wonder, then, if the individual who, unsustained by Christian principle, ventures to throw off these peculiarities, rushes into other liberties—or that those whom parental or Church authority keeps within the prescribed limits, rest in outward forms, never become awakened to the high privileges or the solemn responsibilities of the Christian calling, and remain through life unprofitable and unfruitful servants—having the form of godliness, but, by the whole tenor of their selfish lives, denying the power, and never putting forth a single effort to promote the glory of their God, or save a perishing brother.

That any young person can go through the ordeal that this peculiarity of dress and manners imposes, without a material influence on his character, it is impossible to suppose. J. J. Gurney himself says, that there are few things which, “in many tender minds, occasion a

greater struggle." We may fairly ask, then, whether, unless these peculiarities be essential to salvation, it is wise to require all the members to pass through such an ordeal; and whether the effect of it on the world at large is not likely to be, that many will be deterred from making that acquaintance with the views of the Society on the great and all-important truths of salvation and of Christian morality, in which they *might* hold up such an important standard to the world. A hedge, if it keeps in those that are on one side, will as effectually keep out those who are at the other. Instead, therefore, of the removal of this artificial barrier to free intercourse with mankind preventing them from upholding their principles of peace and spiritual worship, it would, especially in connexion with a systematic ministry, and a *healthy tone of earnestness in the members generally*, afford them opportunities of usefulness on a more extensive scale than any they have ever yet enjoyed; and there would be some prospect of the world being effectually leavened by their views: whereas, according to recent symptoms, the course hitherto pursued was likely to end, at no distant period, in their light being totally extinguished.

J. J. Gurney attributes the declension of those Friends who give up the "peculiarities," to want of Christian boldness:—"Not daring to be Christians according to that peculiar line of duty which the Lord has cast up for them, they appear almost to cease from being Christians at all."* But the question may fairly be asked, Is this *peculiar line* of duty one that the Lord has cast up for them, or is there something of man's contrivance in it?—a portion of the development of a system, arranged, doubtless, by men divinely raised up, and under a measure of the Holy Spirit's influence—but not in such a manner as to exclude the possibility of some dross being mixed amongst the silver, and some of the human element mixing itself with the Divine. That many who deviate in these particulars do cease to entertain or to practise the other principles of the Friends, is perfectly true—and that they become mixed with the irreligious world. But firstly, it must here be borne in mind, that the retention

* "Observations," p. 441.

of the peculiarities is no guarantee for that which is right in other respects—and hundreds who have been rigid in the maintenance of these peculiarities, have, at the same time, been guilty of gross violations of the moral laws; and secondly—of the class to whom J. J. Gurney refers, nothing better could be expected, whether they conform in these particulars or not. He describes them as persons who “are secretly unfaithful to their convictions, and pusillanimously forsake the peculiarities rather than take up the cross.” If they are convinced that the peculiarities are indeed the cross that they are in duty bound to take up, then they are very likely to “be left in a state of dwarfishness and sterility, destitute at once both of the form and of the substance of religion.” But this is no argument in favour of the system—pusillanimity shrinks from the cross in whatever form—and further, it often requires more courage by far, to throw off than to retain the peculiarities. There are thousands who do retain them simply because it is more conducive to their worldly interests to do so. Such persons remain in a state of equal sterility in the Society—the only difference being that though destitute of the *substance*, they cling pertinaciously to the *form*. It is not an uncommon remark for young men in the Society, that they *cannot afford* to be anything else but Quakers.

It would be well for the Friends, however, to consider in how far the indifference to religious matters exhibited by many of those who “throw off the Friend,” is to be attributed to that lack of religious instruction and religious care to which we have elsewhere alluded. If the Friends secured the early and hearty reception of the great truths of religion in their young members, there would be something to bind them to the Society—they would be more open to arguments in favour of the “minor peculiarities,” if there really be anything in them, and would have more inducement to *bear* them; if they did not altogether approve them; while, if they failed to regard them as binding, a thorough acquaintance with the great doctrines of the Society would be incomparably more likely to exert a permanent influence over their future lives and characters, than the peculiarities could possibly do under any circumstances.

There are, however, a very large and an increasing number of Friends, really earnest and well-meaning, who are dissatisfied with these "minor peculiarities," on very different grounds from those already referred to, but whom the orthodox find it very difficult to regard as sincere in their convictions. They conscientiously believe that these peculiarities, so far from being essential to the welfare of the Society, are positively injurious; and for that reason they give them up. If the Friends who trace the history of the reprobates, and triumphantly bring them forward as a proof of the danger of throwing off the peculiarities, would be equally diligent in following out the history of those who leave them on higher grounds, they would find that a vast number of them become consistent, devout, and eminently useful members of other religious communities. If, in many cases, they give up their peculiar views with regard to the *eminent spirituality* of the Gospel, it cannot, perhaps, be wondered at, when we take into account the small amount of religious teaching of which they have had the benefit, and the influence that the regular instructions of the appointed minister may be expected to exert on the comparatively blank mind of his proselyte.

It must be clear to every reflecting mind, that whatever may be advanced as to not insisting on a *peculiar form* of dress, but merely on Christian plainness, it is, in reality, and emphatically, the peculiar form to which importance is attached. Though there remain multitudes of fops and belles in the world, butterflies and peacocks in human form, and pride in dress still presents one of the most formidable barriers to vital godliness,—still there are vast numbers of persons out of the Society of Friends, who are as exemplary in their Christian simplicity as the Friends can possibly be. Plainness is now no longer singular; and *mere plainness* would not, in any degree, have the effect of keeping the Friends distinct from other sincere Christians. It would form no "hedge," no "external bulwark," and to it, therefore, the argument of the links in the chain, the providential protection, the necessity of keeping visibly distinct from the world, and making intercourse with it artificially difficult, as a necessary condition to the maintenance of the major peculiarities, would all

fall to the ground. Let the plain fact, then, be no longer kept out of sight, that the Friends consider a distinguishing badge in dress and manners essential to the maintenance of their system—to its very existence in the world; and then let it be asked, whether Christianity requires such a badge? If not—and we maintain that there is no authority for it in Scripture—then it is clear that Quakerism is Christianity, and *something more*—something of man's invention, and which must, in the long run, prove prejudicial to the true interests of the Society. That it has grown up providentially, in any proper sense of the term, may be fairly questioned. The same might be said of every custom or arrangement which arises in any church out of the workings of the principles with which that church set out. But still the question remains, whether such custom or arrangement is the sound result of a sound principle, or whether it is something of a different character, overlooked in its tendencies while undeveloped, but, in reality, nothing more than a caricature or an abuse of some great principle. This is a question of vital importance; for it is the nature of all abuses to produce an *increasingly* injurious influence, in proportion as they become interwoven and identified with that which is good—rendering their detection and removal of ever-increasing difficulty and danger to the organization of which they form an element. The only true policy, however, is to look the evil in the face while time allows. The refusal to reform faulty particulars, for fear of disturbing the whole fabric, can only end in a more confirmed and desperate morbid condition, consummated by a correspondingly disastrous and sweeping catastrophe.

That the “minor peculiarities” are an abuse, we think the foregoing observations have sufficiently proved. They are, indeed, the valuable—nay, essentially Christian—testimony against superfluity and ostentation, degenerated into a religious badge, a distinguishing mark, “an external and visible sign,” not of “an inward grace,” it may be, but of the wearer's being united in religious fellowship with a society that entertains certain peculiar views, distinguishing and separating them not more from a world that lieth in sin, than from other sections of the Christian Church. It is the shell, which,

as J. J. Gurney justly intimates, is in great danger of being rested in, when the kernel is no longer there. Could any figure more aptly describe the existing state of things in the Society of Friends? It may be safely laid down as a maxim, that whenever, in any Christian community, anything is insisted on over and above what is written, any restrictions imposed that do not arise *immediately* out of the *universally* binding requirements of the Gospel towards God and man, a corresponding laxity will, in process of time, supervene in the carrying out of the real duty of which the restriction in question is a counterfeit:—"Ye tithe mint, and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God." There is less of this, we admit, amongst the Friends than in some other directions; but it should not be matter of surprise, if, with an amount of sound good sense, admirable arrangements, and high principle, rarely found in combination, some imperfections should insinuate themselves to mar the great work. It is earnestly to be desired, that, rather than give themselves up to expire of inanition, consoling themselves with the idea that their work is done, they would examine, in all candour and good faith, their whole admirable system, remedy its defects, correct its abuses, and go forth again in the strength of the Lord, with their youth renewed, to do battle with sin and Satan, and win fresh trophies for the Prince of Peace. Let the Society of Friends be assured they have still a great work to accomplish in the world. Their spirit is right, their foundation is sound. The good old ship is still seaworthy, but the tackle is somewhat quaint and unserviceable, and some of the timbers are worm-eaten. Let the rotten timbers be removed, and the sails and tackle remodelled in such a way as their own experience and that of others may suggest, and they will once more fill a most important place in the world, and exert an influence for good, such as, perhaps, no other existing organization has the power to do. If we are asked our opinion, however, as to the probability of their having the candour and the courage to make these changes, we should reply by two of the declarations of Christ:—

"New wine must be put into new bottles."

“No man having tasted old wine, straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better.”

A word to the wise is sufficient.

Let the quaint style of dress and manners be dispensed with—let the hymn be sung, and the Scriptures read, and the grand and simple views of the Friends propounded Sabbath after Sabbath by a competent ministry,—and their neat and commodious meeting-houses, now so silent and deserted, would soon be the resort of eager listening multitudes, who, unattracted by any of the existing forms of Christianity, would be ready and anxious to hear—some, it may be, from curiosity, but far more from a desire to know more fully the mystery of godliness as unfolded in the Christian Scriptures—that going on to perfection to which the Apostle alludes in the first verse of the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, to the elucidation of which he devotes the greater portion of that truly magnificent epistle, and which perfection, consisting, as it does, in the *entire superseding* of the ministration of condemnation, with all its “washings and sprinklings and carnal ordinances, by the eminently spiritual” ministration of reconciliation, the Friends have more fully recognized than any people that have hitherto been raised up.

In the mean time, it must be admitted, that while the badge fails, on the one hand, to prevent the worldly-minded and the pleasure-seeker from gratifying their carnal inclinations, it becomes, on the other hand, an *unnecessary* cross, and *therefore* a snare to the conscience—gives to the world a very erroneous idea of the true character of the Friends, and closes the door to their extended usefulness. Neither does the badge prevent the entrance of considerable latitude with regard to true Christian plainness, if, in any degree, it secures the end in view. The young Friend may be a consummate fop or belle, and yet be “consistent;” and it is notorious, that a very large display of vanity, with the badge, would be regarded with much more lenity than perfect plainness and simplicity, if not recommended by conformity. It is not less notorious, that the Friends whose means will admit of it, make up, to a great extent, for plainness of colour and of shape, by richness of material; while, amongst the more

wealthy, their houses, their furniture, the supply of their tables, and their trains of attendants, rival in sumptuousness the most worldly people of the land. The modern Quaker, to use the expression of a native of Somerset, has "a desperate hard hold of both worlds." He answers, in too many instances, to the description of a certain man who, so far as we can learn, was of unimpeachable moral character, but who, instead of finding his highest good in glorifying his God, and using his wealth, as God's steward, for the benefit of a suffering world, was absorbed in his creature-comforts and creature-enjoyments. He was "clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day."

This type of modern Quakerism glories in the peculiarities—thinks that the Society, AS IT IS, is eminently adapted for a *certain class of minds*, and that the sole duty of the Society is, not to engage actively in seeking the conversion of sinners, and the extensive diffusion of its views, but to extend a kind of collateral influence on the world, bearing a species of silent, negative testimony to certain great truths, and against certain great evils—not seeking to enlarge their own borders with numbers changed by their instrumentality from darkness to light, but content to exert just enough influence in awakening sinners, to make one here and there more susceptible of the influence exerted by their neighbour Churches; their province being to wait in dignified reserve, until the world, at an infinite cost of searching out—for which search, by the way, no motive is assigned—discovers them in the very retired position that they have taken up, and becomes, by some mysterious process, alive to the existence and the excellency of certain great truths that they never have heard propounded, and of whose very existence they are not likely ever to dream, unless the Friends will condescendingly break the silence of a century, and once more *freely give* that which once they freely received.

A leading sentiment with the class we now refer to is, that true religion is not merely profitable, but that it is *equally* profitable for both worlds—that it secures to its possessor a prospect of heaven, together with the largest possible amount of this world's enjoyment, comfort and honour. Alas! thus has the offence of the cross ceased—thus it

is that men neutralize all their piety and their zeal by the vain attempt to serve both God and mammon. But Christ has declared this to be impossible. The very circumstance that the Friend has now little or no cross to bear—that his very peculiarities are tolerated, like ivy on the walls of a ruined abbey,—should make him seriously ask the question, whether he is really doing all that is required in the Great Master's service. We are told, on the highest authority, that all who will live godly must suffer persecution. Such a doctrine as we have referred to above, would have sounded very strange to the earnest spirits who won for the Friends the position they have occupied for the last two hundred years. What of the browbeating before magistrates—the infliction of heavy fines and imprisonment, for no other crime than keeping a conscience void of offence before God and man—their being classed as traitors and felons, and confined in the same dungeons with such characters, for no other reason than their refusal to break the command of Christ, "Swear not at all"—their persecution by the gaolers, and by the felons whose imprisonment they shared—the loss of health and life itself from the damp and unwholesome character of the dungeons where they were immured? Alas! how unlike are the refined, ease-loving, money-making Quakers of the present day, to the suffering, toiling men, who gave their backs to the smiter, and their cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and their bodies to be walked over as the streets! Little of worldly honour or sympathy did these men receive, while they nobly suffered in order that they might preserve intact their high principles and their rights as Christian citizens, and hand them down intact to a posterity—alas! how unworthy!—men whose voices were to be heard in the markets, at the roadside, proclaiming, often amid the scoffs and jeers of the godless multitude and the brutal violence of an infuriated soldiery, the truth as it is in Jesus. May the day soon come, when, instead of being trammelled by a formalism of their own, the Friends will return to their primitive testimony against all formalism; dare again the frown of the state-protected ecclesiastic, and the scoff of an ungodly world, and come up to the help of the Lord, to "the help of the Lord against the mighty."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD.

"He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand : but the hand of the diligent maketh rich."—PROV. x. 4.

"Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things ; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."—LUKE xvi. 25.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the REPROACH of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt : for he had respect unto the recompence of reward."—HEB. xi. 24-26.

THERE can be no doubt that the Society of Friends, in common with all the Churches of Christendom, suffers severely from the worldly spirit—the lust of gain, and ambition of worldly ease, enjoyment, and distinction. The regular and strictly temperate life of the true Christian, his uniform integrity and steady application to his daily calling, bring a blessing upon him, and he increases in wealth. We say a blessing, for, if used in strict accordance with the law of Christ, wealth is a blessing—not to keep, not to hoard, not to spend in ministering to low and unworthy appetites and desires, nor to lay up for the generation to come—but to use as God's stewards in doing good, by relieving the wants of our neighbours, and promoting the benevolent enterprises which, in the Spirit of Christ, are set on foot for lessening the suffering that abounds in the world, removing stumbling-blocks out of the way of the truth, and promoting the spread of the glad tidings of "peace on earth and good-will to men." But there is a snare in the very possession of wealth. If retained in possession, it produces, by an inevitable tendency, which nothing but God's grace can possibly counteract, a certain benumbing in-

fluence upon the possessor, which shuts up his bowels of compassion, and makes him clutch his gold with tighter grasp, in a proportion directly corresponding with the quantity possessed; so that, as a general rule, the more men have, the less willing they are to part with it, unless for the express purpose of bringing in still more. John Wesley has three maxims in connexion with this subject, two of which are most industriously put in practice:—"Get all you can, save all you can;" but the third, "GIVE all you can," which alone reconciles the other two with the exalted, self-sacrificing, world-renouncing spirit of the Gospel, is, alas! almost entirely forgotten. Did the disciples of Christ thus literally fulfil the command of their Lord, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," how altered would the aspect of the Churches at once become! how would all the Christian graces be quickened! Faith, love, zeal, and holy ardour, would glow and abound; and instead of the word being choked, and becoming unfruitful, fruit would be brought forth, not thirty, nor sixty, but an hundred-fold.

It will probably be admitted by all, that the spirit of trade, the lust of gain, is an easily besetting sin of the modern Quaker. Indeed, so notorious is the fact, that this very worldly-mindedness is the reason most commonly advanced to account for the degeneracy and lifelessness that now prevail. This, in part, may be true—it is the case with all Churches, more or less; but it is by no means the principal cause. The same absence of means to keep alive their principles, by the living voice to which we have already attributed so much, has done its work as effectually here. The writings of the early Friends abound with the most beautiful and instructive homilies on the danger and the undesirableness of wealth, and the duty of regarding it, as we have already intimated, as a trust to be employed for the glory of the Giver. Such, however, is the change that has come over the whole Society, that any one advancing precisely the same views as are to be found in their own standard works, would be regarded by the great majority of the Society as nothing better than a dreamer and enthusiast. Some noble exceptions the Society has always presented, of men who felt it to be their high privilege to

deny themselves, and live in the most simple and unostentatious manner, in order that all the surplus they could command might be lovingly and gratefully devoted to the cause of Christ. All honour to such men, wherever found ! their number, alas ! is painfully small ; while the order of the day appears to be, to strive, if possible, to reconcile the essentially heterogeneous services of God and mammon. We cannot, however, avoid the suspicion, that, though a cause, the spirit of the world is by no means the chief cause, of the state of things which forms the subject of the present inquiry.

It has been remarked, that the Friend, having declined the theatre, the ball-room, and the place of popular amusement, is at liberty to engross his mind more with the affairs of business. There is, doubtless, truth in this ; but this is a tendency which the Friends would not have felt injuriously, had they occupied themselves industriously in works of mercy and in the diffusion of truth. The man who lives and walks in the spirit of Christ, and takes means to bring himself into immediate acquaintance with the world of misery and depravity which lies at his very door, will have no occasion for the fascinations of the gay world, or the attractions of the counting-house, to fill the blank in his mind. In such a mind there will be no blank ; and if “ eternity’s too short to utter all God’s praise,” surely time will be too short to exhibit Christ’s spirit in snatching, as brands from the burning, a few of those who are perishing by myriads every hour we live. The complaint, too, is often made, that there are comparatively few of the men Friends engaged in the work of the ministry, and that the work is left, for the most part, to the women. This, too, is generally attributed to the mercantile habits of the men. Here, we think, the Friends do themselves an injustice. The spirit of mammon-worship is not half so deep or so inveterate as this supposition would imply ; nor can we believe that it is deeper amongst them than it is amongst other societies where the same anomalies are not found in connexion with it. Shall we not rather find the silence of the men accounted for in the fact already referred to, that *no means* are taken to employ, encourage, or call out the gifts that they may possess ? They are left entirely to themselves, without direct religious sym-

pathy, or minor opportunities for calling their gifts into exercise, until, from some strong impulse, under which reason often has been known to reel, they feel themselves constrained to speak in the solemn assemblies of God's people. The artificial difficulties that the Friends have thus thrown in the way of the relief of the full heart in speaking of God's goodness, thus seriously limit the operations of the Spirit; and there have, doubtless, been thousands of Friends who, if they had been suitably encouraged, would, from small beginnings, gradually have gone on to become young men, and strong men and fathers in Christ—apt to teach and to preach too, and to take the oversight of God's heritage; but who, for want of this encouragement, have allowed their early convictions and the zeal of their first love to cool down in inaction, and *never* taken any active steps in the Church or in the world, for the glory of God or the spiritual welfare of man. No wonder if, under these circumstances, the young Friend seeks employment in commerce, or in science or natural history, and gradually becomes almost totally indifferent to Zion's welfare or the salvation of sinners. We fear that thousands who might have been exemplary and eminent in usefulness, have, from this cause, degenerated into mere formalists—who frequent the silent meeting, not because of any amount of good that they get there, but because they are led to do so by educational prejudice, habitual inaction in the affairs of religion, and the approval of those with whose good opinion their worldly interests are intimately associated. It is thus that their negative system has produced coldness and worldly-mindedness; and the worldly mind, reacting on the spiritual state, has lessened still further the fitness and the inclination for the self-denying, flesh-mortifying, pride-abasing service of the cross. Let earnest care be exercised to secure the true conversion of every member, and to find employment for each in the affairs of the Church, suited to his stage of growth and feeling, and calculated to bring into productive exercise his measure of grace, whether larger or smaller;—growth in grace would be the necessary result, with an increasing interest in the things of God, which would leave no room in the heart for the love of wealth, ease, or honour; being filled with the

Spirit of God, the spirit of the world would be effectually excluded. A negative religion is no religion at all. Unless the creature finds his highest good in entire conformity to the will of the Creator, and his most exalted pleasure in labouring for the cause of Christ and the good of man, nothing will prevent the "lust of other things" from entering, with all its deadening influence. It is by WORKS that FAITH IS MADE PERFECT.

CHAPTER XX.

MARRIAGE REGULATIONS AND BIRTHRIGHT MEMBERSHIP.

"I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."—JOHN x. 9.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."—JOHN x. 1.

THERE is no doubt that the regulations of the Friends with reference to marriage have had a material effect on the present condition of the Society. The object of preventing marriage with any but members is a very good one; but it may be secured at too great a cost. The effect of the regulation seems to be, to cause many whose good sense leads them to sacrifice the privilege of membership with a small section of the Church of Christ, by the violation of one of their arbitrary rules, rather than do violence to the sacred obligations of a pure and exalted affection; while to those who conscientiously adhere to the rule because *it is* the rule of the Society, it materially limits the sphere for choice—preventing, in thousands of instances, attachments in every other respect most eligible, and causing, where the attachment has been formed, a blasting of the highest and purest earthly hopes, for which something more than mere human law should be required. The effect of this arrangement in diminishing the numbers of the Society is threefold:—1. Many members leave the Society altogether, who, but for this regulation, would, in all pro-

bability have remained permanently connected with it. From careful statistics recently drawn up, it appears that out of every three members of the Society who marry, one member is lost to the Society by becoming united to some one not a member—a circumstance in itself enough to explain much of the state of affairs with regard to diminished numbers; but a circumstance which must itself have a cause, and which, we think, is by no means fully accounted for by the regulations with regard to marriage. 2. The expulsion of the delinquent lessens very much the probability of the partner being induced to join the Society—of which, if there were in it all the life and all the supply for spiritual necessities which there ought to be, the probability would be very considerable; whereas the present dull and inactive state of things is as little calculated to attract the devout believer who has been accustomed to the more lively fellowship and more copious teachings of some other community, as it is likely to arouse the godless or the indifferent. 3. It materially lessens the number of marriages in the Society itself—dooming to life-long celibacy hundreds of persons of both sexes, who, if they had a wider sphere of choice, would, almost to a certainty, change a single for a married life.

The practice of the Friends in making the restoration of the delinquent so easy as they do, to some extent nullifies the process of disownment—while their making it an act of delinquency at all, as with the peculiar dress, confuses the sense of right and wrong, and gives to a merely human arrangement, of very questionable propriety, much of the authority and sanction of an actual Christian duty. In this light, indeed, it is viewed—and the whole course of the discipline and the advice extended on such occasions go on the assumption, that, in “marrying out of the Society,” a member is violating his duty to God, and perils his soul’s eternal welfare by the deed. Inconsistency of this kind may be taken as unfailing proof of something faulty in the system. The Friends, we believe, have erred here, as in other matters, in attaching more importance to conformity than to unity. “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,” they make to apply to non-members—and they look more to conformity in the mode of worship, than to the heart being right with

God. Persons may be met with out of the Society of equal piety and intelligence with any within its borders. If, then, a young and eligible *member* becomes acquainted with an individual of the opposite sex—pious, sensible, well trained, of suitable age and position, fitting them in every respect to become partners for life, save the sole circumstance that they belong to different sections of the same universal Church of Christ, and that one of those sections has made it a rule that its members shall marry none but their fellow-members,—no law of God will be broken if they realize their fondest hopes by becoming man and wife. An arbitrary law of man's forming, and of very questionable propriety, will have been violated, and nothing more; while, to break off such a connexion when once formed, involves consequences of so serious a character, that nothing short of the most imperative necessity, or absolute sense of duty, should allow the idea to be entertained.

The Friends appear to have had their eyes opened during the present year to the injurious influence of their marriage regulations, and it is probable that they will, before long, undergo a considerable modification. The change proposed is, to permit those who attend their meetings, and in other respects conform to their views, though not members, to be married to members, without involving a breach of the rules. This is, doubtless, a step in the right direction; but it is a very small one; and, sanguine as some of the more thoughtful are as to the beneficial working of the contemplated change, we feel certain, that, so far as any fundamental or extensive improvement in the state of things is concerned, it will prove almost inoperative. There is in this, as in other parts of their system, a sacrificing of unity to conformity—a preferring Quakerism to Christianity—a resting satisfied with conviction instead of conversion,—all arising, as we conceive, out of the fundamental error discussed in the earlier portions of this work, which, so long as it is permitted to remain, will render totally abortive every attempt to restore animation to the languid organism, until the fundamental error is thoroughly rectified. Let that be done—let systematic means be employed to supply the needful instruction to the members, and to proclaim freely the doc-

trines of the Society, and let proper care be taken that none but suitable matches be encouraged, without restricting any to members of their own denomination or those who worship with them,—and new life and animation would at once be infused. If, under these circumstances, a member was lost now and then by being drawn over to other societies, the tendency in that direction would be incomparably less than under the present silent system; while the probability would be incomparably greater than at present, of those who were brought amongst them by this means becoming permanently attached to the Society.

There could not, perhaps, be a stronger proof of the injurious working of the present regulations than the practice of match-making which some of the older members undertake on behalf of the younger. Having fixed upon certain parties that they consider suitable for each other, they take opportunities for hinting the subject to each of them separately; and then, if the suggestion is at all favourably received, they assist in obtaining opportunities for interviews, and promote, through its various stages, the consummation which, in their more than paternal solicitude, they have thought desirable. We do not affirm that connexions brought about in this way may never be blessed to the parties, though we think the probability is very much against a favourable result. Certain we are, however, that a state of things which renders this kind of interference desirable, or even possible, in connexion with the most delicate and most important of all the relations of life, must be very anomalous and very unsatisfactory, and in itself a strong objection to that exclusive regimen which has rendered it possible.

The subject of Birthright Membership, as it exists amongst the Friends, is one which has long claimed the attention of the thoughtful amongst them, and been regarded as one of the causes of the Society's decay. There can be very little doubt as to the correctness of this impression. The tendency of this arrangement considerably resembles that of infant baptism in the Church of England, which introduces all, alike, without reference to moral or spiritual fitness, into the privileges and responsibilities of the Church. This influence is felt

in a fourfold manner,—on parents, on their offspring, on the Church and its officers, and on the world at large. There cannot be a moment's doubt as to the obligation that is laid on Christian parents, of training and instructing their children in the great truths and duties of our holy religion; and it may, at first sight, appear that the practice of regarding children from the birth as members is calculated to favour the faithful discharge of this sacred trust. It appears, however, that while the practice does not afford additional facilities or motives for the promotion of this object, it has the effect of lessening, on the part of the parent, the sense of responsibility that would otherwise be felt. The very idea of the child being born into a society whose views and practices we approve, seems to present a guarantee for its being surrounded by the influences that we should desire for it; and the tendency to rest satisfied, to a certain extent, with this provision, is too extensively felt and acknowledged by the more thoughtful members to require any proof. The external peculiarities have been allowed, in a peculiar manner, to add to this sense of security. They are, as we have seen, regarded as a hedge, keeping the tender lambs from evil influences, and evil influences from the tender lambs. The feeling of responsibility on the part of the parents is thus weakened. Regarding his child as “providentially” cut off, in a great measure, from the snares and temptations of the world at large, he is less urgently impressed with the importance of prayerfully inculcating *right principles*, pursuing a system of judicious training, and seeking for the early and sound conversion of his children, and their decided and *deliberate* entrance on the narrow way that leadeth unto life, and to which the narrow way marked out by external badges and educational or ecclesiastical restrictions bears a certain resemblance—a delusive one, however, and one which, as we have already seen, operates on the unawakened mind only to occasion a feeling of prejudice against the whole system of which they form a part,—to the truly awakened as a constant source of unnecessary and discouraging temptation, and to the world at large as a means of deterring the seeking mind from becoming acquainted with their views on more important matters.

The same kind of influence operates no less powerfully on the officers of the Society, who, from the circumstance that the great bulk of the Society grow up in their midst, and that their official care of the members does not commence until some delinquency gives occasion for their interference, have no motive to concern themselves with the spiritual condition of the young people, except that of a general Christian regard; a motive which, while it is essential as the basis of all spiritual oversight, will be found practically inadequate, unless called into systematic operation by the established regulations of the Society. Every living member of the Church will take a kindly interest in the best welfare of the others; and every one who in reality travails for Zion's welfare, will seek occasions for encouraging the feeble, counselling the simple, and rebuking the offending; all the faithfulness of the members thus spontaneously exercised, will never supersede the necessity of having suitable persons appointed, with suitable occasions for securing these objects. So far does the fear of man, and the slothful disposition to avoid duties of almost every kind, operate on all, that, to the generality of persons, some such motive is absolutely necessary; while, to those whose love and zeal afford a sufficient impulse, the exercise of kindly intentions will be materially facilitated, and the way opened, by prescribed occasions. As it is, no one having an immediate feeling of responsibility in the matter, all, with very few exceptions, shrink from the duty: when undertaken, it is generally with a great deal of hesitancy and fear whether it may prove acceptable; and so uncommon has anything of the kind become in the Society, that when any one, actuated by a little more than ordinary zeal, steps out of the way to engage in such labours, his efforts are regarded by the educationally and birth-right-privileged, but indifferent members, as nothing better than a sheer impertinence.

The influence of these arrangements on the members themselves is correspondingly injurious. Installed, without any regard to moral or spiritual fitness, in all the privileges and prerogatives of full members, possessing an equal legislative authority with the oldest, most experienced of the community, accustomed

from childhood to a garb and mode of address that shuts him out from the world at large, and conveys an impression of superior sanctity—what wonder if the young Friend who does not become impatient of the yoke, should grow up pharisaically trusting in his goodly heritage, his guarded education, his external conformity—to the neglect of that change of heart, that growth in grace, and consistent, self-denying life, spent in labouring for the cause of Christ, which belong to the Divine life, and constitute the necessary qualifications for membership in the Church of Christ, and heirship to the kingdom of heaven. It is often remarked by persons of other religious persuasions, that the young people of the Society of Friends exhibit a disposition to treat with levity everything connected with religion, in a manner not to be met with in the young people similarly connected with the earnest members of other denominations. We fear that there is too much truth in this observation—though there certainly are, to some extent, indications of a change for the better. We believe that this observation, so far as it is correct, is mainly to be accounted for by the joint influence of birthright membership, the “minor peculiarities,” and silent meetings, and the absence of systematic religious care over the individual members. They are made educationally singular, before they can possibly appreciate the reasons for which they are sent into the world with a dress and address that make them a laughing-stock to their fellows; they become impatient of the religious influence with which this arbitrary restriction is connected; and many of them resolve, long beforehand, that they will seize the first opportunity to throw off a restraint which cannot fail to be irksome, which J. J. Gurney himself characterizes as one of the severest ordeals to which the Christian can be subjected, but for the endurance of which the young Friend has never had any satisfactory reasons presented to his mind, and which he sees incessantly violated by those to whom he has to look up for example. When, at the public schools of the Society, the teachers endeavour to enforce attention to these matters, the constant reply is, “Please, they don’t do so at home.”

If it be said, that filial duty ought to present a sufficient motive to

the young, we reply, that there is in human nature, at best, so much to put parental authority and filial duty to the test, that it is unwise, to say the least of it, to increase the difficulties in the way of a thorough parental discipline, and to lessen the moral influence of the parent, by awakening prejudice and disgust, in connexion with that which involves the breach of no moral law, and which, however it may recommend itself to the truly-awakened believer, can have no weight with the unregenerate youth.

If the badge is kept up at all, its adoption should be the result of conviction. We know the objection that will be made to this suggestion—that if left thus, it would never be adopted at all, except in a few isolated cases. “It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth,” say the Friends: doubtless—the yoke of judicious restraint and discriminating discipline, which will tax to the utmost the wisest parental skill—and the yoke of Christ, which no parental authority can impose, but to which the young and susceptible mind may be imperceptibly led; and let parental authority reserve its strength unimpaired for those legitimate occasions which, if justice is to be done to its solemn responsibilities, will try its strength to the utmost, without any artificial means being used to bring the young and vigorous spirit into painful collision with necessary control, or to lessen the profound respect that children ought to entertain for their parents, and from which, in a great measure, their first ideas of duty to the God that made them, will, in the first instance, have to be derived.

The young Friends of the present day may be divided into four classes:—1, Those who throw off the restraints of education and of moral principle, and become abandoned characters; 2, Those who become the subjects of converting and sanctifying grace, and who adhere to the views, practices, and communion of the Society; 3, Those who, equally the subjects of saving grace, leave the Friends, and become valuable and active members of other communities; and, 4, Those who, while they remain connected with the Society and take a part in the affairs of the Church, have, nevertheless, never been influenced by converting grace, are totally ignorant of the

divine life, and are either rank hypocrites or mere worldlings—purely indifferent to everything that concerns the true welfare of the body.

It must be seen at once, that the infusion of the two latter elements—the hypocrite and the worldling—amongst the regenerate and living members of the Church, and of their worldly principles and maxims into the deliberations of the body, must exert a serious deadening influence upon the whole community, and materially lower the standard of duty which the Church maintains. It is impossible, in the very nature of things, that a Church thus constituted can either feel or exert that lively interest in divine things—that glowing zeal for God's glory and man's salvation—that indifference to the laugh or the frown of the world, or to its honeyed and gilded baits, which might reasonably be expected in a Church composed only of the regenerate.

The necessary result of this state of things, in connexion with the deficient teaching of their doctrines, is to convert the Society, from an evangelical community, into a society, for the most part, of mere moralists. This tendency is painfully felt by many of the more earnest members, who would gladly hail any measure that was likely to infuse amongst them a larger proportion of the spirit of the Gospel.

There is no object gained by birthright membership that might not be secured without it. The religious education of the young might be as effectually attended to; they might, after leaving school, become members of Bible classes, in which the great truths of the Gospel as held by the Society might be regularly inculcated, doubts and difficulties expressed and removed, and suitable opportunities seized for pressing home upon each and all the vast importance of seeking first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness. They might then, after a satisfactory evidence of their living interest in divine things, be recognized as members, and gradually encouraged to employ themselves in the affairs of the Church, the exercises of the sanctuary, and works of mercy. Opportunities would be presented in the distribution of tracts, teaching in the Sabbath-school, visiting the sick. In the Church, opportunities for spontaneous utterance, in thanksgiving,

prayer, or exhortation, being afforded, it would soon be seen to whom gifts were communicated—which, under the watchful and judicious care of the more experienced members, might gradually be brought forward into healthy exercise, to the benefit of the individual, the Church, and the world. As, in the early days of the Society, the meetings for discipline were not open to all the young people, but only to those who, on account of their sedate and becoming walk as Christians, were invited to sit down with their brethren,—so, now, only the truly-awakened would be admissible to them. What was thus lost in numbers would be gained in strength, the united spiritual exercise of the living members not being checked or interfered with by the admixture of the indifferent. If it be objected, that this would keep the younger branches of Friends' families from growing up in familiarity with the nature of the discipline, and learning to take an interest in its welfare,—we reply, from most extensive acquaintance with the facts of the case, that, next to the “peculiarities,” there is nothing which so prejudices the minds of the young against the Society as their being *required* to attend meetings for discipline. This is the point at which a settled aversion to the Society often commences. Nothing would be lost, and very much gained, by keeping the unawakened out of the meetings for discipline.

So far from the Friends exerting the influence that they ought to do, in spreading their principles abroad in the world,—they are, from the joint operation of birthright membership and the absence of efficient religious teaching, becoming dead to those very views themselves. With regard to war, for instance, Christian feeling has been retrograding both in the world at large and in the Society of Friends. We have conversed with numbers of them who, while actively engaged in the affairs of the Society, justify war; while mammon-worship and the desire of high standing in the world are exerting an ever-intensifying influence directly hostile to the self-denying and humble spirit of the Gospel. The more wealthy members are more and more assimilating in spirit and habits to the world—the pleasures of the table, handsome houses and furniture, and stylish equipages, with parties, excursions, concerts, entertainments, and everything calcu-

lated to gratify "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," taking the greater share of time and attention, weaning the heart from the things of God's salvation, and steadily eating out the life of the Church. While one-half of the members are engaged in seeking the pleasures that wealth commands, another very large section are earning their daily bread by occupations that would not have their existence if there were no sinful tastes to be gratified—pandering to, and stimulating into extraordinary activity, the vicious appetites of their fellows—literally, in many instances, living by the vice and the folly of their fellow-men. At a time like the present, when the whole nation is taking upon itself the responsibility of aggression and grasping violence in foreign lands, and converting into a grand national crime that which has hitherto been the crime of a company, and the comparatively small number more or less directly connected with the governing class—a stern, uncompromising voice like that which the Friends might have raised with all the authority of the Gospel ministry, seconded by a steady refusal to enter into any compromise with the wide-sweeping iniquity, would, under the Divine blessing, have exerted a most important influence, and might have been an adequate instrument in the hands of the Omnipotent for awakening this great nation to the true character of the mad career of oppression and selfish aggrandizement, at the expense of the weaker peoples of the East, into which we are now rushing with infatuated and headlong precipitancy, and which, in the very nature of things, must eventually, if persisted in, destroy the very life of religion in this land of religious freedom and Gospel light and liberty.

CHAPTER XXI.

SUPPORT OF THE POOR.

“Blessed is he that considereth the poor : the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive ; and he shall be blessed upon the earth : and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing : thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.”—PSALM xli. 1–3.

“But to do good and communicate forget not : for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”—HEB. xiii. 16.

It is doubtless an imperative Christian duty, to employ superfluous wealth for the benefit of the needy ; and few will deny, that while the claims of suffering humanity will never fail to awaken sympathy in the child of God, the needy members of the Church of Christ have an especial claim on the individual believer and on the Church. The manner in which Oberlin urged upon his flock the duty of caring for their poorer neighbours, was truly exemplary. Amongst the questions that he addressed to them in writing, and to which he expected satisfactory answers, were the following :—

“Do you never pass a Sunday without employing yourself in some work of charity ?”

“Do those who are provided with necessary clothes employ a regular part of their income to procure them for their destitute neighbours, or to relieve their other necessities ?”

In the same spirit he himself was most particular in devoting a certain share of his own income to the alleviation of others' wants, and in accustoming himself to the STRICTEST SELF-DENIAL, in order to increase his means of doing good. He used his utmost endeavours to persuade others to imitate his example, and to avoid any superfluity in their clothes or in their manner of living, that they might have the more to spare for the exalted purpose of doing good.

The regulation of the Friends, by which they undertake to support their own poor, is a fine embodiment of the same spirit. In the

early days of the Society, indeed, the spirit of love and self-sacrifice for each other so prevailed, that the Friends then presented an example which has rarely been equalled—certainly never excelled—since the apostles' days. They were willing to spend and be spent for each other—they bore one another's burdens, and hazarded their own safety in the hope of assisting each other, and undertook incredible labours in order to lessen each other's sufferings, and obtain some mitigation of the terrible fires of persecution by which they were tried. The richly dressed, snugly housed and sumptuously entertained Friends of the present day, have as little in common with their forefathers in the truth, in this respect, as in their cold and formal silent meetings, when compared with the fervent zeal and the ready utterance of living truth that marked their early days. The disposition that led them then to part with all for Christ and their suffering brethren, is now represented by an arrangement which, good as it is, can only be regarded as the shadow of that fervent charity which, alas! however exhibited in individuals, has long ceased to distinguish the great bulk of the community.

It is, at the same time, open to question, whether in undertaking the actual support of the poorer members, the Friends have not gone a little beyond the happy medium in which true safety and permanent utility reside. As with the badges, a certain amount of complacency is produced in some orders of mind by the very fact. It is a great thing to be able to say, we provide for all our poor members. It is quite possible, however, that like other matters of routine, it may come to be done without that fervent love existing which gives its true value to every work of mercy. It may exist as part of a system, and be kept up with pride by men who never felt a touch of true generosity, and never made a real sacrifice for the sake of a suffering neighbour.

The immediate object, however, of noticing the subject here, is to point out its bearing on the diminishing numbers. It is to be feared that the feeling of complacency to which we have already alluded, induces many of the members, and, to a certain extent, the Society as a whole, to feel less responsibility in connexion with the indigent

and the suffering in the world at large. It is very natural for them to say, "If all did as we do, the poor would be efficiently looked after;"—but then all do not do so. It is to be feared that no existing religious community approaches anywhere near the standard established by Christ with reference to the poor. He has left them under the guardianship of his followers—assuring them, that whatever is done for them He will consider as done for Himself; and yet how little the generality of the Friends know of the suffering and sorrow, the abject misery and absolute starvation, that is incessantly going on within a few paces of their own dwellings and places of business! The indifference to the spiritual welfare of the perishing finds its counterpart in this disregard of their bodily welfare. We do not here lose sight of the many noble exceptions that exist—nor are we comparing the Friends injuriously with all the other denominations. We could mention some that are much more faithful in this respect than others—and it is capable of demonstration, that those churches that are the most exemplary in this respect secure the strongest hold on the affections of the people, and see their labours crowned with the greatest number of souls added to the number of the saved. It is this kind of agency which gives the Wesleyans, in spite of their arbitrary and tyrannical Conference, such a strong hold on the affections of the people. Let the tract distributors, the visitors of the sick, and the conductors of cottage prayer-meetings desist from their unostentatious labours, and the Conference would soon find itself left without the sinews of war, with empty coffers and empty chapels. Let the members of any community be diligent in the kind of work we have been describing—only let it be done in a spirit of love, and they will not fail to secure the sympathies and the willing ears of the people.

But in addition to the complacency engendered by the system of the Friends, and the consequent neglect of the poor that are out of their pale, the very fact that they are pledged to the support of all their needy members, operates powerfully as a check to their disposition to seek for proselytes in the humbler walks of life. It becomes, in short, an element in the consideration of an application for mem-

bership, what degree of probability there is of the individual becoming, at some not very distant period, a burden to the Society. We are not here giving an opinion as to the desirableness or otherwise of the regulation in question. We think it possible, that by proper watchfulness and counteracting influences, the evil tendencies to which we have referred might be counterbalanced; but we certainly think that this regulation is a cause, amongst others, and in the way that we have indicated, of the Society not keeping up, or advancing its numbers. When it is borne in mind that the same order of things prevails now as gave rise to the declaration, "Not many noble, not many mighty are called," it may be seen at a glance, that in any society which fails to win trophies from the kingdom of Satan by going to those "poor of this world" that God has chosen "rich in faith" and "heirs of the kingdom," the probability of growth, or even of permanence, is immensely lessened.

CHAPTER XXII.

CONCLUSION.

"This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."—MATT. xvii. 21.

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."—MATT. xxvi. 41.

"As they ministered unto the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."—ACTS xiii. 2, 3.

As our inquiry draws to a close, we feel, as we have done during its progress, that though its design is good, and our motive, we believe, thoroughly sincere, our task has, nevertheless, something of an invidious character about it. The office of fault-finder—the duty of searching out and exposing defects—is one which, to every generous mind, must be unpleasant; and it is scarcely possible to be faithful—so faithful as to effect any really desirable result—without giving

pain, and seeming—especially to those who have not deeply examined the subject—needlessly severe. We can, however, with the faithful surgeon, say, “We wound but to heal;” and we trust that enough has been said in passing, to show our respect, not only for the Society itself, but also for the greater proportion of its views and principles. Even where we have felt compelled to condemn, we have not done so without a feeling of profound respect, under a conviction that even the errors of the Society are in very close relationship to most important, and, alas! generally neglected truths.

The return to the simple thee and thou of primitive times, the disuse of complimentary titles, the importance attached to plainness of dress and manners,—all are embodiments—exaggerated, or in some measure warped, it may be—but still embodiments of a great principle. We have already shown how, in reference to these principles, extremes meet, and living testimonies degenerate into badges and lifeless forms; and while we repudiate these semblances of Christian principle, we should hail with unmixed joy every sign of a disposition, on the part of the Friends, to return to their own noble standard of two hundred years ago.

The same remarks apply to their system of worship. While objecting to that which has supervened upon their early views and practices, we should be sorry indeed if anything that we have written should convey the impression that we undervalue those views of the extremely solemn nature of Christian worship, or the immense advantage to the spiritual life of that introversion of soul, that recollectedness of mind, which it was one of their grand objects to recommend and to attain. To the present day, there is a degree of weightiness about the character and the life and actions of a genuine, spiritually-minded, earnest, liberal-hearted Quaker, which is very rare in other communities. We should say, that if the changes we have suggested could not be attained but by the sacrifice of this high integrity, this collected and weighty spirit, they would be dearly purchased. Sure we are that the religious professors of other persuasions have as much to learn from the Friends as the Friends from them. The Spirit's work is the same, and it effects the same results

when yielded to and cherished, irrespective of creed or system; and there is far more in common between the most spiritually-minded of the different sections of Christ's Church, than there is between the spiritual of any given community and the worldly or frivolous of the same community. George Fox, and John Wesley, and John Fletcher, Baxter, and Rowland Hill, and Charles Simeon, had far more in common with each other than the wine-drinking, cigar-smoking, money-making, concert-going gentlemen that now occupy prominent places in the several sections of the several churches to which they belonged, have with any of those worthies. Mrs. Fletcher, Elizabeth Fry, the widow Fell, Sarah Grubb, Madame Guyon, and, in short, the women who, in whatever section of the Church, answer to the apostle's description, and possess the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, combined with true filial love to God, and earnest self-sacrificing love to man, and untiring energy on behalf of the suffering and the erring, have infinitely more in common with each other than the gay, the giddy, and the vain, who, forgetting alike the claims of the poor and those of their own precious offspring, spend their lives in one unchanging round of exciting reading, shopping, dressing, and visiting, and still remain attached to the several churches which were once adorned by the pious and devoted lives of the worthies we have mentioned above.

While, then, we should deeply regret the occurrence of anything that was in the least degree calculated to lessen the value attached by the Friends, even in these degenerate days, to the deep and solid work of religion, we would record our settled conviction, that the changes we have suggested—so far from being likely to produce this result, guarded as their introduction would be by the present strong bias of the Friends in the opposite direction—would be likely rather to promote this desirable object. The result would be a system combining in a greater degree than any at present existing, the deep and exalted spirituality of the Friends with that kind and degree of **SYSTEMATIC INSTRUMENTAL AGENCY** which, as we have shown, is necessary to the carrying out of the great design for which the Church of Christ exists.

That there was in the Apostolic days some process to a certain extent analogous to the silent waiting of the Friends—in object at least, if not in method—may be gathered from the frequent allusions to fasting in connexion with prayer. We believe that the churches of the present day suffer immensely from the neglect of this important accompaniment to prayer. It does not imply merely protracted abstinence from food, but a continuous application to the one sole object in hand—a complete withdrawal of the thoughts and affections from all the affairs and objects of time, that they may be centred steadily upon the great object of worship. But this does not imply, of necessity, outward silence; nor, supposing that it did, does it warrant our making silence the essential preliminary to all the services of the sanctuary, whether in praise or prayer, reading the Scriptures, or preaching the Word.

We have already alluded to the injunction of Christ to tarry at Jerusalem, and “wait for the promise of the Father.” We have shown how Robert Barclay brings in that passage to support the theory of silent waiting; but a reference to the facts of the case will show how different was the mode in which the time was spent, from that which is implied by his quotation of the passage in support of his favourite theory. The period that elapsed between the injunction to wait being given and the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, was ten days—a rather unusually lengthy period for a silent meeting. But we are not left to conjecture as to the manner in which the time was spent. We are told, (Acts xi. 14,) that “these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication”—not with “silent waiting.” They were waiting, nevertheless—waiting at Jerusalem—waiting in united exercise; and, as Luke informs us, (xxiv. 52, 53,) when Jesus had ascended to heaven, “they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.” Sometimes in the temple, sometimes in the “upper room, where abode both Peter, James, and John,” and others—not silently waiting, but full of joy at the proofs they had received of their Lord and Master being all that He had led them to expect—they praised and blessed God; and, full of expecta-

tion of the promised Comforter, they "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." But these delightful exercises did not fill up all the time. There was discipline to exercise in the infant Church. Judas had fallen, and some one must be appointed to take his office. "And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples," who then numbered about one hundred and twenty, and, having stated the facts of the case, proposed that of those men that had associated with them during the whole period of Christ's ministry, suffering, and resurrection and ascension, one should be ordained to be a witness with them "of his resurrection." "And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots: and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."—Acts i. 23–26.

Here, then, we have, in addition to the praises and prayers and supplications already referred to, an address, vocal prayer on a special occasion, the very words of which are given, and the election of an apostle by lot,—and all in the interval consigned by Robert Barclay to silent waiting. There are occasions mentioned in the Old Testament which far more resemble the silent waiting of the Friends than anything that they adduce in support of it; but then these were on especial occasions, in great national or other emergencies, the spontaneous result of strong emotion too great for utterance,—not the occasions for the deliberate worship of the Almighty, or the systematic teaching of the law.

When Israel were defeated at Ai in connexion with the trespass of Achan, "Joshua rent his clothes, and he fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel." He then prayed; and the answer to his prayer was to urge him to action: "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned." He was to sanctify the people, that the accursed thing might be removed. Is there not, we would ask, a

lesson for the Friends in this ? Over-activity is an evil, but it appears possible to err in the opposite direction. "Wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face ? Israel hath sinned." Similar instances may be met with : Judges xx. 26, when the rest of Israel contended with the tribe of Benjamin ; 1 Samuel vii. 6, when Samuel gathered the people together to Mizpeh on account of their idolatry, saying, "I will pray to the Lord for you." "And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said, We have sinned against the Lord." We pass by many instances of a similar character, to notice that of Ezra, who, overwhelmed by a sense of the iniquity of his people in connexion with their intermarriage with strangers, tells us, "And I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice. And at the evening sacrifice, I arose up from my heaviness ; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God, and said, O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God : for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens." * Ezra was joined in this exercise by "every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel ;" † and at the conclusion of his prayer and confession, "there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children : for the people wept very sore." Still Ezra continued mourning and fasting ; and the result of this extraordinary exercise was, that the people encouraged him to proceed in the matter—a general assembly of the people was summoned, and they rested not until they had put away this grievous sin from them. But this occasion may no more be taken as a model for all meetings for worship, than the description by Paul of the meetings where all might speak and all be edified. We find in Nehemiah viii. 1, that "the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water-gate ; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel." He read to them, accordingly, "from morning until mid-day." He is then described as standing upon a pulpit of

* Ezra ix. 4-6.

† ver. 4.

wood—not a box like the pulpits of modern days, but a platform rather, for thirteen of his brethren stood beside him upon it. “And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, (for he was above all the people;) and, when he opened it, all the people stood up: and Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God: and all the people answered, Amen, amen, with lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.” Immediately afterwards are given the names of others who explained the law, and “caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place.” So they read in the book of the law distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. If, then, the reading and expounding of the law was not incompatible with the solemn worship of the Almighty, why should the reading of the Bible be now? If the Friends can find a precedent for their silent waitings in one part of Scripture, why reject that reading and expounding which are equally distinctly described, and which are far more insisted on and alluded to as a systematic and permanent arrangement; while the occasions of lying on their faces and sitting “astonied” were, as we have already observed, the expressions of strong emotion resulting from some extraordinary and peculiar combination of circumstances. The extent to which the Jewish mode of worship is to be regarded as a precedent for that of Christians is open to question: certain, however, it is, that if it favours silent waiting on the one hand, it favours, to at least an equal extent, the systematic reading and expounding of the Scriptures at set times, and without waiting for any special impulse in the sense implied by the Friends.

Enough, we trust, has now been said, to show that we have no desire in the least degree to lower the high standard that the Friends have sought to maintain with regard to the eminent spirituality of the Christian dispensation—the reality of the Holy Spirit’s work in the hearts of believers, and especially in fitting for and calling to the ministry of the Gospel. We shall feel that our labour has not been in vain, if the view we have taken of the subject should, in God’s good providence and grace, be permitted to quicken the Society to a

fresh appreciation of the very exalted privileges with which they are invested, and the solemn responsibilities resting upon them with reference not only to their own members, but to the perishing world by which they are surrounded. Could they be induced to make the changes we have indicated, we feel assured that they might awaken to the life and vigour and influence of their early days, and again constitute a burning and a shining light—again take their place in the van amongst the hosts of those armies of the saints, who even now are wrestling against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places—not with carnal weapons, but with those spiritual weapons that are mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds. Such an influence as the Friends would thus exert, is emphatically the want of the times. Their peace principles, based on the utter incompatibility of war with the Gospel, will alone counteract the present tendency in favour of war; their thorough-going integrity is wanted to cleanse the commercial horizon; their pure and simple views on baptism and the supper will alone present an effectual barrier to the encroachments of Popery, whether openly avowed, or stealthily under cover of the half-reformed ceremonies of the Anglican Church. Should the Friends, however, fail to make these necessary changes, illustrating the declaration of Christ, “No man having tasted old wine straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better,”—we feel assured that a people will be raised in the Lord’s own time—and that before many years have rolled away—who, going back to the law and the testimony, with the fear of God before their eyes, and not disdaining to learn from the successes or the failures of all the existing churches, will combine the doctrines and much of the church policy of the Friends with the activity and method of the Wesleyans, and thus give the initiative to an organization approaching more nearly to the true Gospel standard in faith and practice than anything that the world has seen since the apostolic days. To have been instrumental in the slightest degree in God’s hands, in bringing about such a consummation, whether in the remodelling of the existing, or the establishment of the new organization, would be regarded by the writer as an object worthy of all the energies he could

put forth, and all the sacrifices that he could make—an object, in short, worth living and dying for. That this little work may in some measure be blessed to this important result, is his earnest prayer.

“Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built. Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man to his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.”—Haggai i. 2-11.

“Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord’s temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: FROM THIS DAY FORTH I WILL BLESS YOU.”—Haggai ii. 18, 19.

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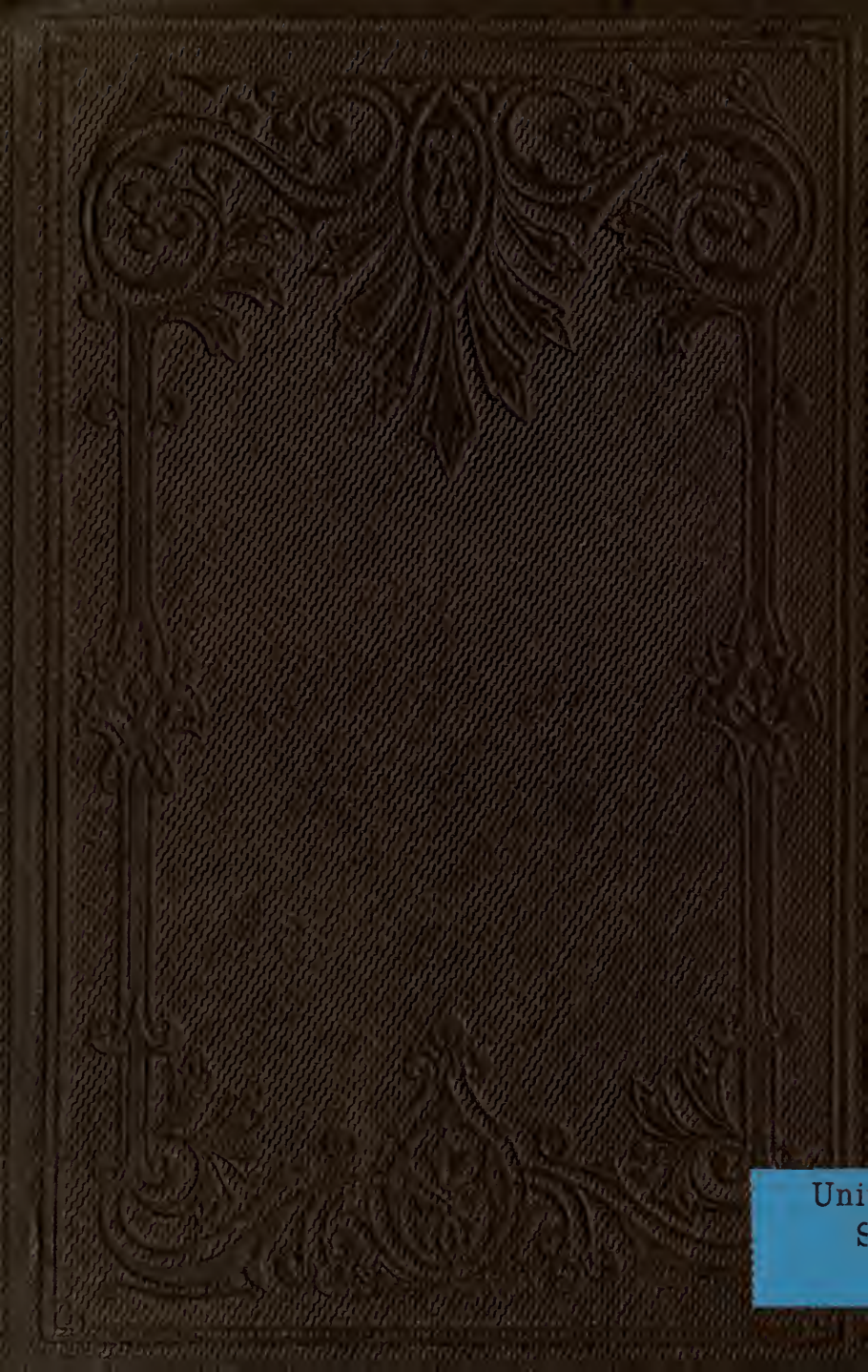
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